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NORTH OF THE TWEED;

OR

LORANCE LANGTON:

HIS LIFE, INCIDENTS, AND ADVENTURES
IN SCOTLAND.

BY

DANIEL CROWBERRY.

“Should you, Sir Stranger, want a book,
And cast on me a passing look ;
Heed not my outward shape or tone,
But purchase, open, and read on.
This done, next, when my parts you scan,
Remember, sir, your fellow man.”

THE BOOK.

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NORTH OF THE TWEED.

CHAPTER I.

LORANCE RE-JOINS HIS MOTHER.—THE SMITHS.

THE gaiety and splendour of a London season, the endless sights and charming scenery of the noble parks in and about the capital, had been to Mrs. Langton, during her summer sojourn, a continual source of admiration and excitement, and she now longed for the rural repose of her native county, Kent—the delicious air of which, impregnated with the hop perfume, was, to her taste, vastly preferable to the most odoriferous

breeze of an eastern or western paradise. Rejoined by her son, the two now proceeded to the vicinity of Tonbridge (preferring on this occasion the mother-town to the daughter, the Wells), where they took up their residence, for a time, in an old-fashioned dwelling-house, then, and still retaining, the unique name of Amuses—the derivation of which we must leave to the inquiry of the etymologist. This choice had been judiciously made from the mildness and salubrity of the locality during the winter months. To Mrs. Langton this neighbourhood had another special recommendation—it was within a convenient distance of Hop Park, the country residence of an esteemed friend and family of the name of Smith. But a word upon this name.

“Smith! Smith, sir!” ejaculates Justice Robinson to an offending youth, alleged to have purloined a pear from his worship’s orchard—“Smith, sir, means nobody or anybody. Give me your proper name directly, or I will send you to prison.”

"It's Robinson Smith, your worship, if that's more haristocratic," replied the audacious urchin.

"Constable, remove the young culprit to prison, with three weeks of hard labour, for falsifying his name."

Thus decreed the judge in great wrath, and such was then the price to be paid for the youth's unfortunate name. Again :

"Smith! common indeed! you're la'yship," retorted an irate cook of the same name, when tartly rated and sneered at by her mistress, Lady Tormentilla Smithers—"But, ma'am, I likes folks it's no ashamed o' their names—I likes a plain, honest name; and now, when ye put me to it, ma'am," continued the offended genius of the kitchen, "where's the mighty differ, I would like to know, 'etween Smith and Smithers, an' other hotch-potches o' the name?—only as is 'etween hegens done plain and hegens smothered—the sauce!"

Lady Smithers fainted, and in half-an-hour the cook's trunk was on the top of a cab.

With her ladyship's cook we quite agree. The plain, honest name of Smith is not to be sneered at. Nor, in support of this averment, need we here recall the host of illustrious characters which have done honour and service to their country under that name. Simply, we hold it to be one of the most enviable and honourable of all our family nomenclature—not unworthy even of royal adoption. Princes have aspired to it; barbarians have paid homage to it; peers and potentates have found in it a current passport throughout Europe. It is, in short, the symbol of our own august realm—an asylum for the distressed of all nations; for kings and commoners in trouble, whose own names have failed to serve them. Too like the generous nation of which it is so truly typical, its hospitality is often sadly abused. Moreover, whilst its valorous sons constitute a powerful arm of strength to the kingdom, its winsome daughters, like Herschel's asteroides, sprinkle our terrestrial hemisphere with a starry lustre. United, again, they possess

the very supreme advantage over all rivals, inasmuch as, numerically speaking, they are in themselves sufficiently independent to constitute a reasonable population for any moderate kingdom or colony yet known to geographers.

“The Smith family,” writes a scientific member, Theophilus Smith, and fifth-cousin of our own, “consists of such marked varieties, as to almost constitute distinctions in the generic order. As with the same species amongst birds, fishes, and quadrupeds, they vary in common characteristics according to the geographical latitudes which they inhabit. The Smiths, for example, found north of the Thames, differ essentially from the Smiths south of the river.” And, pressing his point with the same tone of high authority, he thus illustrates—“The Smiths in Kent differ as widely from the Smiths of Essex, as the Smiths of Surrey differ from the Smiths in Middlesex.”

This is perfectly intelligible to us. But, when he further urges upon us, what he is pleased to term the results of his investigations, and affirms

that, by means of a powerful glass, he can tell a Smith from a Jones or Robinson at half a league distant we confess to something like the dawn of a new discovery in science upon us. Assuredly this is the golden age of wonders ; and we have lived too long among the philosophers, conjurors, alchymists of the day to be disbelievers in anything but the infallibility of our credit at our banker's. But to unscientific persons like ourselves, the marvel must yet be vastly increased, when he avers that the process can be effected with as much optical accuracy as that by which the common eye can distinguish the difference betwixt the walk of an Irishman and a native Saxon in Fleet Street. For the latter distinction by the way, with the precision of an archæologist, he accounts in this manner :—

“ When the last four kings of Ireland—Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught—were vanquished by the English monarch, they made a solemn vow amongst themselves to disinherit their children and repudiate their subjects, if they

either spoke the language of the Saxon, used the manufactures of the Saxon, or walked with short steps like the Saxon. Thus," continues Cousin Theop., "we are furnished with a remarkable illustration of the indomitable spirit of that heroic race; inasmuch as that, when their arms could no longer successfully strive against the enemy, their legs were taught to shew their enmity to their conquerors. In other words—although the superior members, and upper half of the body became subject to England, the inferior, or nether half, maintained its national independence—

'Our arms, O Green Isle ! may submit to the chain,
But our hearts and our *trotters* unconquered remain.'

Hence it is, as her 'patriots' assure us, Ireland never was, and never will be, wholly conquered by the Saxon.' "

Returning to our subject: according to the theory of Cousin Theophilus, Mr. Philemon Smith—whereby we mean the respected friend and neighbour of Mrs. Langton—combines in his

personnel all the genuine characteristics of his type, the Smiths of Kent. Although for the life of him, he says, he cannot comprehend why Phil.'s honoured papa and mamma should have gone out of England, with all its home-wealth of orthodox names, and travelled to Syracuse or Greece, not only for an un-English one, but one purely of the Pagan order, for their baby, yet, when all this is done, to have alighted upon one representing a character as unlike the genius of the child as were Anacreon's for Demosthenes, or Catullus's for Cicero! seeing that neither of these famous orators ever composed two decent couplets in the whole course of their great lives. Philemon of the east was a wit and writer of comedies ; Philemon of the west was reared to the English bar, of which he was an ornament for talent and probity ; but, possessed of a pastoral taste, gracefully turned his pen and blue-bag into a shepherd's-crook and woollen-pouch in his riper years. Moreover, who ever heard of a Smith of Kent playing

with our illustrious *Punch* at wit, or revelling with Tom Taylor or William Congreve on the stage? Furthermore, when about it, why not, asks our friend, have chosen an Alexander, or a Philip, or a Pericles, or some other great historical name for their boy?

Nevertheless, albeit the mythological name Philemon Smith is a chip of the true orthodox tree, and possesses a heart full of kindly and generous impulses. Benevolence is deeply stamped upon his countenance, which is over-spread with strong, manly, yet mild and expressive features; has dark blue meditative eyes, in which repose at once a spirit of resolution and gentleness; a good Saxon mouth and set of teeth, bushy eyebrows, and a forehead denoting a vigorous and playful intellect, but sadly domineered over by what he (our authority) terms the true type of this Kentish family—namely, a rebellious head of hair, acknowledging only the supremacy of the sissors, and defying alike the usurpation of fashion and the tyranny

of the comb, but obstinately persisting in separating itself into a community of small independent republics. Hence it is, as we are further assured, that an acute observer may trace with no more certainty, in a gallery of sculpture or paintings, the illustrious members of the Medici family by their royal noses than he can, in an uncovered assembly, this brotherhood of the Smiths, by this singularity in their hair—in Scotch parlance, by their “toosy heeds,”—a boon which we ourselves abundantly inherit from an ancestor, through an intermarriage with the family, as we suspect.

Mrs. Phil. Smith—an ingraft, of course, upon the Smith tree, of which twig it were but due to say it, appears to have been an abstract from the choicest standard of the rosy pippen order in the garden of Kent—possesses in her person a pleasing and comely presence, an amiable and lively disposition; a pair of fine black eyes, dark and well defined eyebrows, with light hair, smooth and silky as gossamer; these being crowned with a graceful and well appointed figure.

Miss Philomela Smith—a more appropriate and characteristic Christian name, as all must cordially admit who, with ourselves, have been promoted to the privilege of listening to her voice—is the sole pledge of the love and affection of this happy and well-assorted pair. Combining in her individuality all the nobler and energetic qualities of the father, toned down to the feminine grace and gentleness in beseeming concord with her portion of the maternal endowments, she reflects the two in one image. Her copious locks are of the raven hue. Her eyes are first copies of her mother's, by the fidelity of nature's own handi-craft, framed in jetty lashes and arching eyebrows. Her features are of the smaller mould, beautifully regular and even, and they are imbued with an expression alternating between a state of profound serenity and genial vivacity. Her perceptions are quick and discriminating; and she is accomplished in all the feminine and fashionable acquirements of the day—in fine, musical as the

bird bearing her name ; rides, dances, and trips the earth with the grace of a Peri.

Such, then—so far as our feeble skill has sustained our efforts in the framing of our cartoon—was the family whom Mrs. Langton and her son had now for their neighbours. That a young lady in her twentieth year, possessed of such estimable qualities and personal attractions, and, withal, a fortune almost equal to her worth, was an object of universal favour, even amongst her own sisterhood—not always overfree of innocent envy—but especially of admiration amongst the fashionable aspirants of the opposite sex, will readily be credited.

In the large china bowl in the hall might, at any time and without number, be seen at a passing glance the visiting cards of old bucks, bristled heroes, professional gentlemen, and whiskered youths of the first water. To have seen “Miss Phil.” was, on the part of those sensitive and susceptible gentlemen, only another way

of saying that they were on their knees at her feet. If our sedate reader will excuse our simile, and conceive with us a scene in the temple of Diana, a more comprehensive notion of the case may be formed.

Raised upon the pedestal stands the figure of the young lady. She would look solemn if she could, but, obviously, in her would-be grave countenance there is a repressed smirk ready, and without a moment's notice, to give her some trouble. Inwardly, she is surprised and amused at the extreme absurdity and ridiculousness of elderly and even young gentlemen ; their gravity is almost too much for her self-control. Next, gentle reader, fancy a floor as large as that of St. Paul's, covered with kneeling suitors, some in white heads, some gray ; some in brown periwigs, with the comely adjuncts of coal-black eyebrows and moustaches ; some of the younger generation with hair parted *a la femme*, and whiskered to the eyes, fresh and browned as new rolls ; some pale and thin hard-working curates ; some con-

fessing to small benefices, with extremely high-church notions, and extremely low shirt-collars, and with something like our grandmother's Sunday-garters about their necks. The scene is very imposing, and full of profound interest to all frail mortals who, like ourselves, have experienced the scorch of the sacred flame. But, alas ! the idol of worship is no more affected by her congregation of suitor-suppliants, than if she were looking upon the meek faces of so many impounded sheep at an agricultural show. When will pretty women learn humanity, and to love ?

Mrs. Langton and her devoted son were now much at Hop Park, while the two only children, Lorance and Philomela, had clearly, during their familiar intercourse, come to the mutual understanding that they were both already too happy with their respective parents to dream of leaving them ; and vastly too sensible for entralling their young hearts in the spoony fooleries of Cupid.

Ovid, with his school of amatory bards, was allowed to repose in the dusky shelves of the library ; and in the grove they could listen to the nightingale, recounting her story of sisterly affection and the perfidy of husbands, or to the moving appeal of the turtle to its coy mate, with the most Platonic composure.

The only extravagant passion in which they here seem to have indulged, and of which they have transmitted to posterity a memorial, was the planting of three young oaks, in the vicinity of a favourite bower, verging upon a fish-pond, probably symbolical of the Graces, and which are still flourishing to this day.

Seated together one evening in the summer-house—they had been reading one of Virgil's *Bucolics*—Mrs. Smith came tripping along the gravelled path on her light footsteps ; for the lady, in her trim figure and graceful walk, looked the very impersonation of the mother of fairies.

“ Phil., dear,” she said, with a cheery smile,

"we have a visitor. Count de Labouche has called on his way from the Wells."

"Well, mamma, I suppose I must *show*; for I am sufficiently acquainted with the absurdities of old single gentlemen, to think he has called so soon again for anybody else," replied the young lady, with a piquancy of humour.

"Gracious me! here he comes," ejaculated the mamma, as she looked round and found the gentleman making his way to the bower.

The young lady immediately rose, and with her parent advanced to meet the visitor, while Lorance retained his seat.

"Ah, mademoiselle," exclaimed the Count, with one of his superb smiles, uncovering his inimitable iron-gray wig, and stretching out his gloved hand, "I'm joyed to see you rivalling the *joli* flowers, and looking the fairest one yourself."

"You're complimentary, Count; but why shouldn't the rose maintain its place in the garden, and look its best in summer-time?"

returned the lady, with an arch smile and side-look to her mother.

The Frenchman wriggled, grinned, and laughed boisterously ; but, his eye catching a glimpse of Lorance on his seat, he lowered his voice and said—

“ But, mademoiselle, I intrude ?”

“ Not in the least,” answered the ladies simultaneously—with which the three proceeded to the house.

Count de Labouche was dressed in a black frock, black wide pantaloons, which flapped loosely about his thin extremities. He had coal-black moustaches, with thick eyebrows to match, and his face shaven all over close to the roots of his hair. His eyes were light-gray ; his mouth was capacious, opening upon a double row of finely-polished artificial teeth, which he took some pride in displaying.

Upon entering the drawing-room with the ladies, the count betrayed a sudden disappoint-

ment on discovering that two gentlemen, in company with Mr. Smith, had entered therein during his momentary absence in the parterre.

He immediately turned round, excused himself on the ground of haste, entered his carriage, and, kissing his hand, drove off.

Of the two other visitors, one was a neighbouring curate. In his hand he held a volume of sermons, bound in purple cloth, which he presented to Philomela, with an injunction that she should peruse them at her leisure, and do him the favour to give her opinion of them when read. The lady cordially accepted the volume, which she said she would certainly read, but must be excused her opinion, as she was not a judge of young gentlemen's sermons. The other was a dashing officer of the —— Regiment. He had overtaken the curate upon the grounds, and the two had "dropped in" together. There was to be a great military ball at Walmer, and the gallant captain was the bearer of an invitation to

the family. In his mission, the gentleman was perfectly successful; for what young lady of twenty can resist an officers' ball?

A double knock and ring are again at the door. The two gentlemen spring to their feet, and speedily depart. The footman announces the next comer. He is a spruce bachelor barrister, and proposes "standing" for Middlesex on the next election. But papa despises Whiggism, and Miss Phil. declines to pledge herself. Doctor Digitts has just "looked in" on his way from a country patient. The doctor is in possession of a flourishing practice; is a widower, with an only child, and a fine carriage. Another knock, and another visitor is ushered in. The physician is in a hurry. The other has a calm and thoughtful bearing in his aspect; is either a poet or artist, or both. A poet, verily!—"a priest of the Melodious Nine." We are reminded of Schiller's admirable poem, entitled the "Sharing of the Earth," in the grand division of which the poet is left without an acre. With our young Pene-

lope's heart, we fear the same adverse allotment has been here awarded, and our luckless bard left without even standing room. Yea, and while in the ardour of his passion he might address her in the pathetic terms of Butler's illustrious hero—

“ I'll carve your name on barks of trees,
With true-love knots and flourishes”—

we strongly suspect, inferring from the look of the hard-hearted demoiselle, that she would receive his strains in a manner very much akin to that expressed by the same author's astute heroine :—

“ Hold, hold,” quoth she—“ no more of this,
Sir Bard, you take your aim amiss ;
For you will find it a hard chapter,
To catch me with poetic rapture.
She that with poetry is won,
Is but a *deck* to write upon ;
And what men say of her, they *mean*
No more than on the thing they lean.”

CHAPTER II.

MRS. LANGTON RETURNS TO INDIA—SAD CHANGES.

TWELVE months had now passed pleasantly over at Amuses, when the health of Mrs. Langton was so thoroughly established that she began to speak of an early return to her distant home in the East. In her letters from Calcutta her husband had expressed a desire to this effect, provided her physicians considered her strength would enable her to safely undertake the journey. No doubt being entertained by the faculty on the point,

preparations for her departure, in company with her son, were shortly entered upon.

From Scotland, up to this time, Lorance had received gratifying reports of the condition of his relation and friends there. The health of Colonel Keith had so much improved, that sanguine hopes were entertained of his speedy return to the Kymes.

Taking an affectionate leave of their friends, and of "dear old England," Lorance and his mother once more bent their course towards India.

The voyage, as voyages by the merchantmen in those days often were, was a protracted one ; but the heavy tedium and monotony of the tardy passage were successfully combated by the ingenuity and happy temperament of most of their fellow-passengers.

On arriving at Calcutta, they were received with all the tenderness of a loving husband and parent. Robert Langton was delighted beyond measure to mark the renovation in the health and personal appearance of his wife.

Lorance, having ere this attained his majority, was now duly inducted into the possession of his late uncle's effects, and had his name recorded with his father's on the books of the partnership. It was now resolved that the son should settle down for a few years to the business of his father, after which the joint interests of the firm should be disposed of, and the family return to England to spend the remainder of their days upon their native soil.

Such, then, was the cherished scheme of these happy parents, after buffetting with the rough world, and spending the prime of life in a far and unwholesome land. But, alas! for the realisation of all earthly dreams. Before the third year of this hopeful career had passed away, the eastern sun had withered up the grass upon the grave of the most gentle and loving of mothers. Mrs. Langton had fallen a victim to another of those fatal maladies incidental to the climate. Her death was a sad bereavement to her husband and son, by whom she had been so fondly loved.

At this period the father and son would willingly have disposed of all their shipping and banking interests, and repaired to England, but their hearts refused to part from the vicinity of that grave in which now reposed the remains of all that had been most dear to them on earth. But the scroll of fate had, ere long, another dark line to unfold to the eyes of our hero. Within the brief period of three years more his father's career had closed, and he was consigned to a place of final rest by the side of his beloved wife. To the son, the loss of his remaining parent was a severe shock, and the natural buoyancy of his spirits, and elasticity of mind, for a time forsook him, and a visible cloud of melancholy settled on his countenance. With time, however, this cloud gradually wore away, and his resigned, happy, and cheerful temperament again returned to him.

Lorance was now sole inheritor of all the joint property of the firm, and his fortune was substantially immense. Possessing but little taste for business, for which he stood in no longer need,

his next undertaking was the disposal of all his Indian property, which he judiciously effected, within a moderate period, and finally returned to England. During his father's lifetime a small estate had been purchased for him by commission in the county of Kent, to the enjoyment of which, in their latter days, his parents had looked forward with many a fond hope. To this place, on his arrival, the son now, with a sorrowing heart, betook himself. It consisted of a small mansion, already handsomely furnished, with about two hundred acres of beautifully wooded and fertile land, with a trickling brook passing through the grounds.

Nearly ten circling years have passed away since Lorance Langton made his last visit to Scotland ; and yet, to look back upon them, they would seem to have occupied scarcely more of the world's time than a ten mile's ride on a stage-coach. Only ten Christmas Eves have come and gone, and the intervals between them appear but as so many consecutive days of familiar toil ; yet

what changes and vicissitudes have not left their indelible marks behind them within that brief period of human existence ! How many immortal spirits have left their clayey fabric and departed for a diviner state !—souls that have grown weary of their earthly travel, or whose aged tenements have crumbled down upon them, leaving only a name, a scar, and a heap of mouldering fragments to mark where they had been !—and from how many of those young and beautiful “temples”—masterpieces of Nature’s softest hand, fashioned of slender bones and rosy flesh—have the souls been crushed out by their ruthless tread ! Yes, ten years—upon the earth’s fair cheek you have left your blister-spots behind you ; and in your rapid raid over her chequered surface you have trodden down some of its noxious weeds, but you have also despoiled it of many of its sweetest flowers, and felled some of its noblest oaks !

Such were the thoughts now revolving in the mind of our hero, as he sat, a solitary occupant, on

the hearth of his new abode. Nor at this hour, . . did the once happy scenes in the Highlands, still so fondly cherished in his memory, yield to his brooding fancy a more cheering picture. Over the Crypt and the Kymes long ere now a cloud had settled down as dark and dismal as that which hovered over his parental tomb. Within the second year from his last departure from the north, he had received intelligence from Miss Murray of the death of Agnes Keith, also of that of her father. Sad was the tale to him. During a sudden relapse of the Colonel's illness his daughter had been forced into a marriage with Sir Francis Heronshaw, and within six months of her wedded life the grave had closed over her young and broken heart.

This atrocious crime had taken place while Lorance was on his voyage to the East.

After his second attack, her father had sufficiently recovered his strength to enable him to be conveyed to his own home, but not until the marriage had been effected.

Upon learning from the lips of his youngest daughter of the cruelty that had been practised upon her sister, the Colonel sunk back in his chair.

He, however, partially recovered from the shock, and for some weeks later was able, but not without support, to walk about the grounds.

On passing the mews he wept, when he saw the solitary hawk, sitting motionless upon its block.

It was now the property of Grizzel, by a parting gift, from her sister, on the eve of her unhappy marriage, who was then in England with her husband.

From the moment the communication was made to him of the unhallowed conduct of his wife, he forbid her his presence, and was never after seen to smile, or to speak to anyone of the household — (fresh servants all) — save only Grizzel, and his old and faithful groom.

His death preceded that of Agnes by a few weeks, both closing life with a broken heart.

In a subsequent letter from the same source,

some further information was communicated to Calcutta respecting the Kymes family.

The surviving daughter, Grizzel, then in her eleventh year, upon the death of her sister, refusing to live with her mother, had found a happier home with an aunt, a widow lady, with an only daughter.

She was a sister of Colonel Keith, and resided in the neighbourhood of the town of Inverness.

To Mrs. Keith herself the letter made but small allusion.

She had left the Kymes, amidst the execrations of the neighbourhood, to reside in Glasgow.

This step, as supposed, was hastened upon her, because of the prejudices her conduct had engendered around her, and probably through the dislike in which she was held by the next heir to the property.

This kinsman was a younger brother of the deceased Colonel, to whom, and his male heirs, the Kymes estate now lapsed.

By her marriage settlement, Mrs. Keith, having surviving offspring, lost all control over her own large fortune, and upon the death of her eldest daughter, without issue, the whole devolved to the surviving child.

There being no settlement executed on the marriage of Agnes, Sir Francis Heronshaw sought to claim her portion; but the trustees being apprised of the compulsory and forced measures by which the union was effected, they firmly and successfully resisted his demands, and in this respect he was left solely upon the bounty of Mrs. Keith.

Such, then, was the fruit this gentleman had reaped from the harvest of ruin he had caused.

To complete the gloomy picture of our Highland scene, we have but to add another figure to the group already produced.

About three years subsequent to the date of these events, Miss Murray died, in the seventy-sixth year of her age. Her death was deeply felt and sincerely mourned by Lorance and his father,

the latter then alive. Her solicitor had communicated the sorrowful tidings, and announced at the same time that Lorance had been appointed sole heir to the estate and her other property. Her old servants had been all pensioned off, and she had made several munificent donations to the poor of the parish, and for educational purposes elsewhere. After her demise the management of the estate had been placed under trust.

Such had then been the sad transmutations of those early scenes in the Highlands, in the midst of which Lorance's young heart was nurtured, and as he now turned his eyes to the north and surveyed them in his imagination, he felt an icy chill pass through his bosom. Yet, to visit the Crypt was a duty, however painful, which he must ere long undertake. He, therefore, after a brief period, set out upon the journey. On his arrival, none of the labourers upon the estate, or inhabitants of the neighbouring village, recognised him. The old housekeeper and gardener were the sole occupants of the old mansion. His

valued old friend and servant, Saunders, no longer able, after the death of his mistress, to endure the desolation of the place, had retired to a distant village to spend the remainder of his days upon a comfortable pension with a relation. Lorance's stay was but of short duration. After some consultations with his land steward and factor, he returned to London. He then divided his time between the capital and his residence in Kent.

By virtue of this property, he became appointed to the Commission of the Peace, to the business of which, when at home, he devoted much attention. But a passion for travelling, partly inherent and partly acquired from circumstances, soon carried him to the Continent, where commencing with the peninsula of Spain and Portugal, he visited most of the classical lands and famous capitals of Europe.

On his return, he shortly meditated another but less distant journey, whither we shall faithfully follow him.

CHAPTER III.

ACROSS THE BORDER.

It was upon the afternoon of a bright summer day, when the subject of our narrative again invites the attention of our patient reader.

He had just alighted from the box seat of a public coach, upon which he had that morning traversed the broad lands of Northumberland, on his passage to the south of Scotland.

The smoke of the burnished steam-engine had not yet presented to the village ostler its first inappreciable contrast with the reek of the four

gallant steeds in their shining harness, which had so often and triumphantly borne the Royal Mail, with its hilarious burden of passengers and *billet-doux*, presided over by “old Dobie,” in his spotless scarlet and crested buttons, across the renowned queen of Scottish rivers, and whirled along that smooth and beautiful road which skirts in part the eastern coast of Berwickshire.

Throughout the whole length of this famous route, which lies between the two great capitals of the United Kingdom, there is perhaps no equal portion which will bear comparison, in local interest and picturesque effect, with that which here sweeps through this Border district, or affords to the traveller so substantial a foretaste of the romantic scenery which awaits him beyond the Forth and Clyde.

On his left the rich and chequered vale of the Merse stretches far and wide to the west; on the east the German Ocean glitters under the morning sun, studded with its innumerable sails; while here and there, as he winds along by hill and

dale, an occasional glimpse of the bold beach, the wild embowering landscape, the thrifty hamlet, with now and then a solitary symbol of the decay of feudal power, greet the eye and diversify the interest.

As if cloven asunder by the sharp sword of some loyal giant to make way for his king, the neat and quiet little town of E—— stands on either side of this high road.

It is pleasantly situated in a fertile valley, sheltered by a panorama of hills, variously cultivated and ornamented by goodly trees and belts of thriving plantations.

In this retired spot, with the punctuality of the sun, the Royal mail now daily appeared, and, as was its wont, drew up for the deposit and reception of the local letter-bags, and the change of horses. And it was within about the centre of this rural habitation that the chariot in question made its brief pause in its onward career.

Here also was it that Lorance Langton vacated his seat on the left of the “whip,” and, after

duly acknowledging his obligations with that important personage, together with the guard, was conducted into a comfortable inn, supporting a painted figure, believed by the simple natives to be that of a “Red Lion.”

Here he intended to spend the night; and as he had yet a portion of the day at his disposal, after partaking of an impromptu dinner, he set out to survey the neighbourhood of the little town.

Sauntering on, he soon found his way to a stone bridge, which spans a small stream, flowing between its picturesque banks in the immediate vicinity.

The prospect here is pretty and imposing, and resting himself against the parapet, he lapsed into a meditative mood, with his eyes turned upon the crystal waters that rippled and bubbled over their stony bed in their ceaseless flow below him.

In a sequestered spot, verging on the brink of the stream, and peering through the intervening foliage, appeared the venerable walls of the parish

church, with its consecrated place of final rest for the departed inhabitants.

Lorance seemed to dwell upon the scene with deep interest ; so much so—perhaps from bygone memories, tenderly associated with some of the grassy mounds—that even the whimpling waters appeared to him to assume, as it were, a more solemn tone as they crept past this voiceless tenement, and to chant forth a sacred hymn or soothing lullaby for the hallowed rest and peaceful repose of all who slept within its silent precincts.

Such seemed to be the state of his mind, or the occupation of his fancy, when the approach of an aged female interrupted his thoughts.

She was of an erect figure, with strong lines on her face, and of grave aspect.

“ Pray, good woman,” said Lorance, addressing her, “ can you inform me who is the occupant of that fine mansion,” pointing to the object.

“ It’s the laird himsel, sir, wha has the best right, I trow,” answered the woman, as she cast a scrutinising glance upon the stranger, impart-

ing to her speech something of that tartness with which the low orders of the Scotch not unfrequently season a reply to a question from a stranger, especially when the purport of it is not over clear to them ; and doubtless satisfied with the information thus imparted, and deeming it her turn to have the next question, she said—

“ Ye’re a stranger, I wat, in these parts ?”

“ It is some years since I visited this part of the country,” he replied, “ and the neighbourhood seems to have undergone considerable changes during the interval.”

“ Changes ! aye changes, I trow, sir,” she remarked, with something like a solemn shake of her head, “ an’ whar is the spot in this wide warlt that was even yesterday the same as to-day ? From the first the Creatwur designed a’ things for change, even the man that walks erect, an’ the beast that is bent down.”

“ Much of the landed property around us appears also to have changed owners,” he observed, edging off from her threatening

sentimentality, of which he now began to feel some dread.

“Aye, aye, indeed, sir,” she added, her grave features here relaxing as she spoke, and putting forth an unexpected gleam of grotesque humour, “an’ by the same changes the inhabitants o’ this parish hae been like the Hebrew eggliers o’ Babylon wi’ the Gentiles o’ Capernaum ; they hae swapped the hen egg for the goose yin.”

These words were uttered with singular volubility, and from their obvious incongruity, and the suddenness with which they fell upon the ear of the listener, they well-nigh overturned his propriety.

“The labouring-classes, then,” he observed, collecting himself, “have materially benefited by the changes under this head ?”

“Dootless, sir, dootless,” she replied promptly, “an’ it’s to the new laird o’ that bonnie park an’ fine mansion, as ye ca’d, ye been speering aboot though it gangs here bee anither name—an’ to the good and comely young laird, for-by the kind

leddies themsels, that the poor o' this toun, an' auld folks like me, hae to thank for the same benefits."

"The former proprietor was, I believe, a gentleman of more limited means?"

"It was aye said sae, I trow," was the reply; and again indicating by her countenance another transitory beam of humour, she added, "an' ye've yebblins heard, sir, o' the auld sayin' on the miller o' Shersit—

' His bannocks are thin when his grist gangs awa',
An' the mill-wheel is dour when the water is sma'.'

But," she continued, "it's a bonnie sight, I ween, to see a gude purse an' a gude heart gang hand an' hand thegither bee the waysides o' the poor an' humble."

As she finished her last sentence another individual approached, upon which the gentleman moved on towards the village.

"D'ye ken wha that fallow may be, neebur Simon?" said the woman to the new-comer.

"Can't tell—did'nt see his face," answered the

man, with a sharpish accent on his words, as he rested down a loaded wheelbarrow of road manure which he was pressing before him.

“ He’s been speerin’ about the C—.”

“ Hum,” uttered the other.

“ Weel, Simon,” she added, “ the man’s vera ceevil ; but the enemy, ye ken, wha worought our fall, has a ceevil tongue in his head, when he wants to tempt or betray the innocent ; an’ I’ve just been jeloosin’, i’ma ain mind, that he may be yin o’ thae lawyer graith frae Edinburgh, come here to pry an’ prowl aboot for some ane’s hurt.”

“ Now, Mrs. Winter, as to who or what he is,” returned Simon, “ it’s no business o’ mine, and as to the deil being civil, I cannot speak to the point, since my line of life doesn’t lie in his way, or bring me into dealings with him. Hoosever, I’ll no affront ye by refusing to take your word as a good warrant for it.” Whereupon Simon moistened his palms, seized his barrow, and strode off, evidently uncertain as to the manner in which his closing sentence would be received ;

there being a current whisper in the village, which had probably reached her ears, that the old dame was not more free than she ought to be of the mysterious powers of witchcraft, consequently dealings with the Evil One.

The “Red Lion,” as now seen in the dusk of the twilight, claims of us a passing glance. It is the hour at which the *feræ naturæ* stalk from their hiding-places. His attitude is altogether portentous ; his hinder proportions are gathered under him ; his long tail is nervously bent into a curl ; his vast and shaggy jaws are opened wide ; his tongue hot, dry, and fiery ; his huge tusks are ready to be gnashed together ; his big eyes are slanting high above the roofs of the adjoining houses. The eastern sky has put forth a thin and silvery radiance—the Queen of Night, in a white scarf flung loosely over her snowy bosom, is just setting out upon her lonely journey. Surely something terrible is about to happen ! Can it be that the fierce monster meditates a spring upon the chaste goddess?—rueful thought !

Perhaps he sees a dainty mouthful in her powdered charioteer? It must be so. Then, O ye rash Man-of-the-moon, have a care of thyself, for if perchance thy sleek sides overbalance thee in the lunar dicky, or otherwise ye stir one surreptitious foot-length nearer to this forbidden town, thy doom is fixed--instant destruction awaits thee at the mouth of this vermillion "king of beasts," its appointed guardian !

Within a square room in this commodious inn our traveller is now seated ; his feet turned towards the fire-place (of fire there is none) ; his right arm resting upon a mahogany table by his side, upon which stand two wax-candles in their shining sticks, a decanter of sherry, a small pewter pot containing whiskey, some glasses with a mug of hot water sending up little fantastic clouds of vapour. He rings the bell, a tap is speedily heard at the door, and the landlord enters with a gracious bow ; he is invited to take a chair at the opposite side of the table, and a tumbler-glass, containing a tiny ladle, is passed

over to him. For a Scotchman, the landlord's face is unusually round, or rather square, being formed of four obtuse angles ; and in intelligence he is not above the average of his class; but he is obliging, temperate, and unobtrusive in his manners. His chief peculiarity lies in his recognition of former guests, and for this talent he has attained some local celebrity. Upwards of twelve years have passed since Lorance Langton, then a youth, on a visit to a college friend in the neighbourhood, had occupied the same room for only one night, and he was recognised, name and surname, at first sight. For the purpose of acquiring all the necessary information respecting his contemplated journey through an unfrequented district on the following day, he had desired his landlord's company to partake of an evening glass with him—an example not unworthy of imitation by travellers in remote parts of Scotland.

CHAPTER IV.

INCIDENT AT A SMALL INN.

THE kingdom of Pluto, with Cerberus at his post, could not boast of more order and tranquillity than characterised for the past night the little town of E——, under the faithful guardianship of its Red Lion ; and the fresh countenance and brisk appetite of its solitary guest, as on the following morning he appeared at the breakfast-table, may be accepted as a good warrant for the assertion. Finding the journey allotted for this day to lie in a wild and mountainous part of the adjoining

country, abounding with abrupt hills, intersected by streams with difficult fords, and altogether impracticable for spring-carriages, our traveller resolved upon undertaking it on horseback, and accordingly had requested his host to supply him with the most suitable animal in his stables.

The business of letting out saddle-horses for hire had formed no part of the public commerce of E——, but the obliging landlord did his best to meet the emergency. The only available animal, therefore, was a nag that had formerly belonged to the Mail staff, in which gallant corps he had spent the best of his days, and was now honourably retained in the service of the inn as a supernumerary stager. From habituation to harness, he was not, however, as a hack, considered altogether desirable. Of this the gentleman was duly apprised; but it being a case of Hobson's choice with him, he was resolved to put him upon trial. He had, moreover, been furnished with a rude chart, by way of a guide to his route through the moors.

Thus equipped and mounted, Lorance set out upon his journey. His course for some miles continued upon the high road, and wherever this was level or smooth, he rode with tolerable safety; but on making a descent, or encountering loose stones, the infirmities of the nag became apparent. After proceeding in this manner for some distance, he came to a roadside-inn, situated within a picturesque valley, and protected from the north winds by a rising hill, densely covered with trees of spontaneous growth. This was the point on his chart at which he was required to leave the high-road, thence to traverse an almost trackless portion of the Lammermoors.

At the door of this humble inn were two persons, apparently of the rank of respectable farmers, seated on horseback, and accompanied by a leash of greyhounds, one of which was of a remarkably handsome form, and drew upon it the admiration of the stranger; it was white as snow, yet possessed of a small speck of jet-black over the right eye. The farmers appeared jovial youths, and

were partaking of a stirrup-glass on passing, probably for the purpose of enjoying a little conversation with the eccentric landlord—an aged Highlander, who was at the time in the act of enlarging with marvellous fluency (for a man in a semi-intoxicated state) upon a subject of ancient history, supported by the authority of Josephus.

As the traveller reined up his horse, he addressed a question or two to the party respecting the route he was about to enter upon. He was answered with due politeness, and a little further conversation ensued. During the brief interview one of the farmers, having learned his purpose, took the liberty to express a doubt whether the horse the stranger was upon would carry him with safety to his journey's end; for he knew, as he said, the animal as well as the rough and difficult road to be encountered. To this the other replied, that since he set out from E—— he had himself become rather apprehensive on the point. “May I ask you, sir,” inquired the farmer,

"if you are acquainted with the bridle-pass across the Moors?"

"I feel quite favoured by a question so kindly put to me," returned the other; "and my answer is, that I have no practical knowledge of it whatever."

"That being the case," added the former, "I fear, sir, you have a difficult undertaking on hand."

In nowise daunted by this intelligence, which the stranger received with a smile, he replied that, "in enterprises of this kind I do not readily surrender to opposing influences; and, strange as it may appear, measured by the more practical standard of the good people here, I must own to the perversity of something like a love for the excitement of adventure; and, usually, I do not relish it the less because it is beset with difficulties. If, therefore, my present horse will not sustain me, I must endeavour to obtain one that will."

It may be questioned whether the reading or

erudition of the young farmer had introduced him to the famous knight of La Mancha. This much is, however, certain, that he listened to these remarks with the interest of a romantic tale. And whether from an appreciation of the stranger's courage and adventurous spirit, or his affable and gentlemanly bearing, was best known to himself; but the speech had produced a most ingratiating effect.

"Now, sir," said he, "will you excuse from me another abrupt question? May I ask if you are acquainted with Mr. B——, the owner of the horse you are upon? for I happen to know both that person and the animal itself."

"Nothing more than what a lodgment for a single night in his inn will warrant me in saying," was the reply; "but I purpose returning thither, where I left my travelling accompaniments, after a stay of a few days among the Lammermoor hills."

Upon this announcement the farmer turned round to his companion, and exchanged with him

a few words in an undertone of voice. He then returned to the gentleman, and, springing from his saddle, said—

“ Sir, I must frankly inform you that you cannot procure here, or at any place within some miles distant, another horse for hire ; but if you will accept the use of this mare, which I now place at your entire service, and will leave your nag with me, which I will undertake to duly return to the owner, I think one of your main difficulties will be overcome. Moreover, sir, I dare venture to say on her behalf, that, as I feel assured you are a good horseman, if you can only keep out of the bogs and moss-holes in the moors, you have nothing to fear on her account ; neither brooks nor stone walls, if they chance to lie in your way. Old Kate,” he continued, casting an approving glance at the fine proportions of the old animal, “ has crossed many a heavier country, and, in her time, has even borne off the laurels in some well-contested fields, where dykes and ditches were found in plenty.”

A proposal so unexpected, and so generously made, could not fail to take the stranger by surprise. He, however, felt that he had no other return to make than to decline it with the warmest expressions of his gratitude. The other, however, fully meant what he had said, and assured the gentleman that he was making no personal sacrifice whatever, as he had at home several other saddle-horses standing idle in his stables—that he could keep the mare for the time mentioned, and then return her either to the inn or to his residence. All scruples being at length overcome, the farmer, in a few seconds more, saw the stranger mounted upon his mare, occupying a neat and well-balanced seat in his saddle. But this spontaneous act of disinterested kindness conferred upon a stranger, was accepted by him with the fullest appreciation of its value ; and it was not the less pleasing to his fancy, because it lent a tinge of romance to the outset of his journey. Romantic, however, as it may seem, it is here recorded as an incident in fact, and may

moreover, be received as a tolerable example of the frank and manly generosity which, under similar circumstance, not unfrequently characterises the Berwickshire farmer.

“ Well, Charlie,” said one of the young farmers to the other, as they rode off from the inn, “ what will ye say if the fellow gallops off with Old Kate, saddle, bridle, and all ? ”

“ Why, I think, Willie,” replied the other, “ I’ll ask of you the favour to mount your fine hunter and gallop after him ; and then, if he get but a hint of your amiable intention, I prophesy that he will give you a good lead out to to the length of John-o’-Grot’s before ye overtake him.”

CHAPTER V.

LORANCE ENTERS UPON THE LAMMERMOORS.

LEAVING the high-road at the rural inn, and disappearing within a small gorge of the opposite banks, our traveller is now seen blithely pursuing his way upon a rough and circuitous parish-road which leads to the top of a broad range of high hills, partially under cultivation. A few solitary trees at intervals marking out the site of a cottage, or small farm-steading, some scattered enclosures with flocks of sheep and cattle, are the chief objects here presented to the eye on the landscape.

As he winds up this rugged path, the cultivated patches and human habitations gradually drop into the rear ; and on attaining his point of elevation he discovers, to his dismay, that he has left also the road, such as it was, behind him ; nothing now remaining to represent such but some unfrequented ruts, which again here and there all but disappear on the open moor.

Crowning the hill, like a vast ocean, an almost boundless tract of the Lammermoors lies at his feet. Here, looking to the westward, he sees for miles upon miles in the broad and undulating expanse of brown heath, varying and alternating with light and green patches of coarse verdure, the wild country he must traverse. Yet for him the prospect had no terrors, but an endless succession of charms ; and a flush of joy rose on his countenance as he first tasted the exhilarating breeze, loaded with the sweet perfume of the heather-bell ; while his fancy—somewhat prone to speculation—seemed to anticipate, with wayward pleasure, the simple incidents that might

crop up by the way to diversify the interest of his solitary journey. Nor did the old huntress, while now she felt the springy turf under her hoofs, once familiar to them, appear less animated, as she sniffed the mountain air and surveyed the open country.

For some time the two—the man and horse—proceeded as if, by mutual compact, they had settled upon making the journey at once one of pleasure as well as of purpose. Disdaining to tread on the broken track, occasionally ragged and crooked, and at times discernible only by lines and tufts of white grass yet resolved, under any divergence from right to left, to keep it in view as the guide from one landmark to another, the horseman availed himself of the ample scope the line afforded of making short exploratory digressions by the wayside.

Upon one of these occasions the challenge, in subdued tones, of a cock-grouse—sounds which, whether in or out of fowling season, fall with a singular charm on the ears of the sportsman—

lured him to a distance beyond what might be set down as prudent on the part of one not thoroughly acquainted with the character of these beguiling lands. Years of absence from Highland scenes and mountain sports (in which, in his earlier days, he had performed a part with all the pleasure and animation of youth) awakened here in his breast a fond desire to again witness one of these beautiful birds on the wing. Casting his eyes in the direction of the sound, he observed, as he thought, on a rising mound, the compact form of this bird, with its head sufficiently raised to command a view of the neighbourhood. He accordingly drew his horse round into that direction. Now, never did sporting spaniel questioning the doubtful scent approach his crouching game with more eagerness of purpose or steadiness of eye, than did our horseman here this small mound. His eye proved indeed that of a sportsman; it had not deceived or disappointed him; for when he had advanced to within thirty paces or so of his ob-

ject, up rose the bird with a boisterous crow of defiance, and with a whir on his wings that thrilled through his heart-strings. Not doubting, from the manner of the bird, that he was the paternal head of a kindred family, the rider made a cast through a portion of long heath hard by, and speedily he had the dam and her numerous brood scattered in the air before him.

Desiring now to shorten the distance by cutting off an angle caused by this detour, and to recover the mountain-track at a farther point, our traveller bore down from the height on which he had been operating, and entered upon a tract of coarse, but dry, undulating ground. When he had proceeded for some distance, he suddenly came upon a stone wall obstructing his passage, and stretching to nearly the extent of a mile on either side of him. Of gate or opening there was none visible throughout its whole length. He surveyed it with some interest. It stood four feet high, with an additional foot of sod-coping. He next looked over it, and saw that the opposite

ground was firm and free from encumbrance. He then dismounted. Was it to make a gap? The idea was atrocious. The old huntress would have scorned the act as an affront offered to her. It was to unloose the girths and adjust the saddle, which, during the previous descent, had crept too much forward to afford free action to the shoulders for a good spring. This done, he remounted, and retreated to the distance of thirty paces. Meanwhile, the mare, as if sensible of what was being done, and of what was expected of her appeared almost impatient with the delay. At this moment it was indeed beautiful to see the old animal with her ears pricked, her blood up, and impatiently shaking her short tail, as she was calmly reined round by her cool rider into position. But no sooner was the signal for the charge given, than, gathering herself up on a canter, she bounded over the wall without condescending to even touch with a foot the soft coping; and it was not until she had galloped beyond it to the distance of a hundred yards that

she would suffer herself to be drawn up and receive an approving pat on the neck from her rider. In truth, judging from an imperious shake of her head, it seemed as if she considered the exploit, so far as she was concerned, a poor affair to "make a fuss about." But troubles and difficulties usually follow close upon each other. Another equally formidable barrier shortly appeared. This was a deep cut or fosse in the rough ground, which had been created to drain off the overflow of water from a flat marsh in the vicinity. The gallant mare, however, was put to it on a fly, and cleared it without a fault.

These obstructions overcome, the horseman now found himself upon a more open and practicable line of country. The turf being smooth, he was enabled to increase his pace to an easy trot. Proceeding in this manner, he observed a person habited as a shepherd, and accompanied by two dogs—one close upon his heels, the other, a more aged animal, lagging a little in the rear. He was skirting a watery bog, overgrown with

tall rushes, tufts of rank heather, and dwarf willows, and evidently pointing his way so that he might hail the stranger. "This is lucky," thought the latter; "I shall now obtain information how I may best extricate myself from these trackless wilds."

The man, meanwhile, was advancing with long strides and a swinging gait. He carried a plaid, which he wore with one end of it under his right arm, and twisted round his neck, covering the lower part of his face in the form of a cravat; while the other end was flung over the left shoulder, and remained floating behind like a pennon in the air. The shoes upon his feet were singular specimens of their craft. Made of the stoutest hide, and peculiarly stitched and seamed, they were heavily mounted with iron plates and hobnails (*Ecossais*, tackets), and possessed a tip of shining metal turned up at the toes. He had about his head and face a forest of dark shaggy hair, wore a slouching hat, was of a coarse and

muscular frame, and bordering upon the middle stage of life.

The coldest and haughtiest of men are addicted at times to confess to sudden gushings of the heart, and yearnings of philanthropy towards those who are about to rescue them from danger, or serve them in the hour of need. It was even so, we opine, at this juncture, with our traveller, who now appeared to be moved with an uncommon desire to put into practice the Christian virtue of common fellowship, and to fraternise with this shepherd. Drawing up his horse upon a slight eminence, while the other was advancing, he took out his cigar-case, lighted a “weed,” and put on a countenance brimful of benignity.

“Good morning,” said he to the countryman, as he came within hailing distance, accompanying the words with a gracious bend forward upon the neck of his steed. The man merely gave a bob with his head and uttered a sort of grunt in return.

"This is a wild country, friend," again said the former, repeating his bow.

"It may be so," replied the other, with a churlish air, "but ah want t' ken what business ye hae here!"

"None whatever," answered the horseman, promptly; "but I have inadvertently come out of my way, and will now thank you to—"

"Yer story, man," interrupted the rustic, "is just that o' a' the poachers and trespassers ah meet wi'; but ah have to tell ye ye're trespassin'; an' it's ma business to prevent it, and take up a' trespassers, an' poachers, an' mosstroopers ah meet wi' here."

Langton, who had still held his cigar-case in his hand, was about to make an offering from its contents; but on perceiving the man's mood, and assuming that he was a servant on duty, he changed his purpose, lest it might have been viewed in the light of a bribe.

"Well, good man," said he, now with a little more reserve in his manner, "you must perceive

that I am not a poacher, nor yet a foraging moss-trooper ; and if you will name to me the penalty of the trespass, I will at once settle scores with you.”

“I’m no sayin’ what ye are,” replied the gruff fellow, “an’ am no to be frightened bee a lofty tone. Ma penalty, ah maun then tell ye, for the first offence, is aye to turn the trespasser back by the way he cam ; an’ as I’ve no seen you here afore—although I ken the mare ye ride—I’ll do the same wi you.”

On hearing this sentence, a smile rose on the face of the trespasser, as he reflected upon the barriers he had crossed. But hoping that a more favourable issue might be arrived at by a prolongation of the parley, he inquired how he happened to know the mare.

“As t’ that ah can tell ye,” said he, “I’ve kenned her for some years, and am now astonished to see her where she is, wi’ a strange Englishman on her back.”

“O, I trust you do not think I have stolen her,” observed the other humorously.

"It wadna be the first—ah mean to say, the first beast that had been *borrowed* without leave, and forgotten to be returned ;—but am no sayin' what ah think ; it's no vera wice to tell yin's thoughts at a' times."

This he uttered with a shrug of his shoulders.

"I can assure you," returned the other, rather amused than offended with the coarse insinuation, "that I hired—I should rather say—obtained the mare upon the road."

"Now, sir," again interrupted the fellow, with an air of triumph, who, doubtless, here thought he had here caught the rogue upon his own tack, "ye first were goin' to say ye hyred the meer, which ah ken'd would be untrue ; and noo ye want to turn roond, like the callants at schule, when onything stown is gotten on them, an' say ye *faund it on the road.*"

Langton at once felt the force of these remarks, and now saw that he had clearly and unwittingly committed himself in the eyes of his opponent for horse-stealing, and this beyond all hope of

appeal. He therefore, as if by a tacit confession of his guilt, bowed his head, and contented himself by merely requesting, as an act of favour or clemency, that he would reverse his former sentence, and allow him to proceed directly on his way.

“Then ye may gang,” said he churlishly, “on yer own account, but no on mine; for it’s my belief ye’ll no wun far.”

“I am very much obliged to you; now will you accept a cigar?” said the traveller frankly, holding out his case, as the other was in the act of turning round to move away.

“Thank ye, but ah dinna blaw (smoke); an’ if ah did, there’s enough o’ whaaps an’ hearounts hereaway, wi’ lang nebs stickin’ oot afore them, without me makin’ another o’ masel.”

As the boor uttered these words he gave a grin like a satyr, accompanied by a hoarse sound, after the manner of a laugh, then strode off, riggling his plaid about his shoulders, and obviously satisfied with the manner in which he

had discharged his duty ; and of the certainty that he had dealt the trooper a hard hit, seeing that he had a cigar in use at the time.

This trifling circumstance amply verifies the common belief that power, however petty in itself, when delegated to the rude and ignorant, seldom fails to produce insolence and violence. That the mountain-churl had here a duty to perform, it is but fair to assume. But duty has its forms and obligations, and can never be accepted as an excuse for outrage.

Thus thought the horseman, as he resumed his journey, and he felt alike mortified and disappointed by the rude manners of this man—happily an exception in his class—prone, as he always had been, to associate with the character of the Scotch shepherd, nursed amidst wild and romantic scenery, the idea of stalwart Corydons and bucksome Phyllisses, feeding on cheese and frugal bannocks, and abounding in blunt civility and rustic hospitality—qualities of which, in earlier life, he had had some substantial proofs.

Being thus a stranger in a trackless wilderness, on first beholding this grotesque but unpoetical swain—if shepherd he really was, for a Scotch plaid and a colly dog do not constitute such, any more than a mitre a bishop—he naturally hoped to receive some opportune information respecting his route. But sooth to say, the rudeness with which he had been so unexpectedly assailed, deterred him from doing himself the humiliation, and the other the homage, of asking of him a question on the point.

Picking his way through a somewhat swampy reach of the moor, the rider next came to an ascent, where the turf was firm under foot, and where he speedily recovered the bridle-path. He now continued his course in a less digressive manner. For some miles the journey was now altogether monotonous and divested of interest ; but on again descending from the higher range of hills, he observed a man upon a stout white pony traversing the moor in an oblique direction, to join the mountain-track a little in advance of

him. Pricking up upon the old mare, he overtook the individual almost immediately he had effected this junction, whereupon the countryman, looking round, politely raised his hat, which salutation was promptly acknowledged by our traveller. These cordial exchanges became the prelude to conversation, and as their roads were now united, the two proceeded socially together.

The new-comer appeared to belong to the order of farmers or yeomen. He was of a stout, robust frame, his face and hands much browned {by the sun, and his countenance denoted intelligence and sagacity, with a touch of blunt humour lurking in faint wrinkles about his eyes.

“If ye had taken the parish-road, sir, at Coppersmith, and airthed ower the hills to the houghs o’ Whittater, ye would hae found that an easier ride than the way ye have chosen,” remarked the yeoman in reply to some observations made by our traveller, as they passed onward, respecting his passage across the moors.

"Had I come from the north, I should have adopted that line," said the other.

"Then, coming from the sooth, sir, ye should hae been directed to take the Dunse road, and there ye would hae had a gude up-pitten for the night, to begin wi', which, I am sorry to say, is a comfort oftener wanted than found by strangers in these outlandish places."

"A desire to visit the town of E——— induced me to take the mountain route."

"O, I really must ask your pardon, sir," exclaimed the yeoman, suddenly checking himself, "and I hope, sir, you'll excuse ma freedom. But, I may tell ye, I am a wee addicted to officiousness, as it may seem, on behalf of strangers wandering by night or day through thae dangerous muirs an' fells; for mony a yin, sir, since I was cradled, has closed an unexpected account wi' life among the peat-mosses and wall-heeds o' the Lammermuirs. And faith, sir, I may also tell ye," he continued, by an easy transition from the pathetic

to the humorous, “if to talk o’ yinsel is no offensive t’ ye, there’s not a ghost or willy-the-wusp that trims a lamp wi’ human grease an’ de’ils lingles, between Billy-mire and Pentland Hills, that kens the oots an’ ins to every bog an’ babbinqua within the next ten parishes better than I do.”

“ Why, friend,” said the other, with a hearty laugh at the assumed and roguish gravity with which the yeoman had alluded to the malignant denizens of the bogs, “ you would lead me to infer that I have met with a descendant of the dreaded moss-troopers of the olden times; for they must have been familiar with the manners and abodes of these wicked genii.”

“ Aweel, sir,” replied the yeoman, chiming in with the laugh, “ ye’re no sae far wrang as ye maybe think, for a’ ye hae said sae. Ma forebears were in fact mosstroopers enough, for they had a common practice of making raids into the wildest parts of the country, to carry off their neighbours’ nowt and oxen, which they drove to distant

markets and turned into money ; and I follow the same avocation ; and if I didna keep a sharp look-oot against the moss-holes and quagmires, I should lose mair beasts in a single night than a' the year's profits would cover. As it is, I hae lost a gye few i' mo time, an' hae had baith ma sheltie an' masel laired up to the chin in them afore now."

" Your avocation then, I presume, consists in the purchase and sale of cattle ?"

" It does, sir ; my farm is but a puir yin, and in a backward place, an' to make amends, I hire grass-perks every spring, wherever I can get them best and cheapest. These I stock wi' lean stots and queys, sometimes got in the muirs, sometimes i' the Hielands, and whiles in Ireland (though the last are no muckle run on here). Then after giein' them the simmer's gerse, I drive them sooth, and sell them on the English side."

The conversation was here brought to a termination, by the route of the yeoman again separating from the cart track, somewhat improved,

which the party had been following. He now drew up, and taking from his pocket a horn snuff-box, finely curved and mounted with silver, made a tap or two upon the lid of it with a finger, took a pinch, then passed it to the stranger, who, probably from politeness, followed his example. The two then, after mutually expressing the pleasure they had each experienced by their accidental meeting, parted, but not before the dealer in cattle had supplied the other with proper instructions to carry him to his destination for the night.

CHAPTER VI.

ARRIVAL AT THE CREELS.

THE rays of the declining sun were still lingering upon the tops of the adjoining hills, foretelling the coming close of that day of heat, when the traveller arrived, as directed, at the sign of the Creels—an inn of some local repute, and much frequented by tourists and lovers of piscatory pursuits. His approach was announced by the barking of dogs, and on drawing up, ere he had time to leave the saddle, the reins of his horse were in the hands of the “ostler” (by courtesy).

Upon advancing to the door of the hostelry he received the greetings of the hostess and a female domestic, by whom he was immediately conducted along a crooked passage to a comfortable sitting-room. A bill of fare for dinner, orally furnished by the gracious mistress of the house, was next hospitably submitted for the gentleman's approval; while a fire—regardless of the August heat—at the hands of the maid, Nelly by name, was speedily kindled on the stone hearth. These preliminaries ended, and a leatheren case containing sundry small articles for temporary use being conveyed to his bed-room, the guest was now left to his own meditations.

Meanwhile the house was stirring in distant parts. The trampling sounds of feet and the predominating voice of the hostess, with the name of Nelly upon her tongue, were distinctly heard on the floor above. The bed-room must be aired, the sheets carried to the kitchen fire, towels and hot water must be forthcoming, and Nelly was up to the chin in a bustle.

Now Nelly was none of the swiftest of her sex, but she was energetic, compliant, and willing to do her best. Nor was Nelly to be mistaken for a sylph. Far otherwise was her fortune. Nature, in the construction of her general organization, with an eye to something substantial, had dealt out her bounty with no sparing hand, having given to her an exuberance of bust, a goodly girth in the middle, with a form dilating plenteously downwards. With the same liberality she had been crowned with an amplitude of dark hair, now matted and tortured into the form of a crow's nest, alike disdaining and defying the subjugation of a cap.

Nor was Nelly's drapery to be overlooked. Her upper garment, technically (in Scotland) termed "bed-gown," was of striped cotton, pink in colour, and so marvellously short that it barely reached to her zone, as the poets would say, to which vicinity it was coyly fastened by a small loop behind. A blue flannel petticoat covered the nether proportions of her figure ; but—tell it not

in Gath—this was again so scanty in length that it stopped suddenly short at a little below the garters, or where they are supposed by us to be, leaving a pair of fat legs, crammed calamitous into a pair of gray home-spun stockings, to the perfect freedom of action. Crinolines at this period were not in fashion. Had it been otherwise, and Nelly clapped her eyes upon a horsehair jupon, in her present kirtle, no one can tell what the consequences might have been. On her feet she had a pair of stout leather shoes, plentifully studded in the soles with shining “tackets,” which upon all occasions gave timely announcement of her approach. Nelly’s features were pleasing, but not handsome—plump, ruddy with divers dimples; and she had a pair of killing brown eyes, that told heavily on the hearts of some rustic youths of the neighbourhood.

In fine, to complete the portrait, let the reader next conceive—for that is all that can be apportioned—this comely figure scudding up and down the stairs, heedless and innocent of the curtness

of her apparel, now with a mug of steaming water —now clasping with her red fat arms, bared to the shoulder, a load of mountain turf for the “gentleman’s room”—now planted on his chamber hearth, stirring and blowing, and feeding the reluctant fire, until it flames and crackles and roars up the chimney, as if from sheer agony for escape, and he will have Nelly before him to life.

Finding the domestic comforts of this remote inn—not yet aspiring to the more ambitious title of hotel—altogether exceeding his expectations, and as it was situated upon the brink of a beautiful stream abounding with trout, thereby affording him a ready opportunity of indulging his cherished passion for angling, our traveller resolved to secure here, for the time at his disposal, safe quarters for himself and horse. To him, moreover, it presented the further advantage of being within a convenient distance of that locality expressly connected with the purport of his journey; and it was still the more appreciable

because, by report, it was the only public establishment of the district in which a gentleman could find a passable lodgment.

Our erratic hero, having once more come to a halt, and as he has entered upon a fresh soil, and about to develop his character under a somewhat different phase to what it has hitherto been our duty to pourtray, we think it may not appear amiss, while he is reposing, to reward the patience of our reader with a reproduction of his portrait. In these pages we have seen him in his childhood and marked his onward progress to his majority. He is now before us in the prime of manhood, when the organization of his body has undergone a physical change as remarkable as that which distinguishes the matured oak from the early shoot of the acorn.

Lorance Langton stands a trifle under six feet, is possessed of a muscular frame, which is happily consorted with a mind energetic and fanciful. His hair (in boyhood light) is dark, his eyes dark blue, his teeth well set, his mouth and general

features manly and expressive, while his countenance is changeful—now profoundly thoughtful, now beaming with an exuberance of animation and buoyance of spirits. Under the Homeric standard, he is nevertheless endowed with many of those qualities which constitute, in the eyes of our fair readers, a practical hero. Like most of the unhappy brotherhood of bachelors, he had, as we opine, prematurely tasted somewhat of the sharp edge of love before he had got well into his full-sized boots ; and probably remembering the smart, has since borne himself amidst the gaieties of the world with a bosom obstinately hardened against all the darts, sweet wiles, and bewitching arts of the softer sex.

The purport of his present journey into the south of Scotland is soon told. By the death of his father and kinswoman, Miss Murray, he felt he had lost all the tender links of continuity between himself and his paternal tree ; had become insulated, and drifted, as he thought, far away from any remains of his ancestral stock.

Over this, in his estranged position, he had frequently and deeply lamented. Notwithstanding the power he possessed, through his great wealth, of commanding friends wheresoever he chose to abide, yet surveying and analysing the neutral world around him, he bethought himself of the old proverb that, however remote or diluted, a “drop of blood is thicker than water.” In his father’s lifetime he had frequently heard his parent speak of a cousin, to whom, from his brave and honourable character, he had in his youth been sincerely and affectionately attached ; but a report of his death, under reduced circumstances, had been communicated to the East through Miss Murray some years before her own demise. But that he had left children behind him had likewise been mentioned in the report ; and whether, upon arriving at maturity, they had emigrated to America, as alleged, or had continued to reside in the South of Scotland, to which their father had retreated upon the forfeiture of his lands, was to Lorance a matter of

uncertainty. Now, to ascertain this point, or discover, if possible, any traces of these children, was the object of his pursuit.

The name of this cousin, now the inheritor only of his father's virtues and misfortunes, was John Langton. Within a very brief period prior to the downfall of his family, he had married a young and beautiful lady, closely related to the ancient house of G——, who had likewise severely suffered by their adherence to the last of the ill-starred Stuarts.

Many incidents in the subsequent life of this exemplary couple are truly worthy of a place amongst the chronicles of a people. Of these we will venture to give a brief illustration.

CHAPTER VII.

JOHN LANGTON—HIS CHARACTER—HEROIC
INCIDENTS.

WITHIN some few years following those sad events referred to in our opening chapter, John Langton, then in the early prime of life, by a wild and mistaken mode of resenting the wrongs of his family, and disdaining any favour with the Government, indiscreetly, but with a magnanimity and spirit of independence worthy of a better fate, betook himself, with his wife—where they settled down for some years—to a humble and solitary

habitation in an obscure part of the Lammermoors, named K——ws.

The dwelling consisted of but three compartments, to which a garden and a few score acres of moorland, chiefly under coarse pasture and heather, were attached. For its occupants this spot had one only attraction—it was their own ; a fragment that had escaped the grasp of their enemies ; yet its annual value at the time barely amounted to twenty pounds of modern currency.

But John—now commonly called “Laird John” by the humble classes by whom he is known—was a man of more than average physical powers, of inexhaustible energy and dauntless resolution, and he now resolved to meet his adverse fortune fairly on this bleak battle ground, and to either die a champion’s death, or buffet her into terms by the force of his own character. He had inherited all his family’s courage, without its alloy of inflexible pride ; and as he here eyed his simple home, and looked into the world around him as

he had never before looked—saw on every side of him the grim visage of poverty lurking in the distance, his muscles swelled in their might, and his courage panted for the charge. And never, at any former period of his life, not even under the clash of arms, were these noble properties to be put to so severe a test as now. Impulsive courage may carry the captain up to the cannon's mouth, but glory, pride, or honour, are often the secret incentives. But the gentleman reared to independence and occupying a lofty rank amongst his peers, who, at the moment of adversity, and without a murmur, can strip his white hands of their lily gloves, doff his courtly mantle, and exchange his glossy cashmeres for the frugal clothing of a man of toil—who can calmly resign his sword, his angling-rod, or his fowling piece, and seize with his soft palm the scythe or the spade, and walk forth into the fields to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow—and all this under the eyes of his native gentry—is indeed a man of the sublimest courage ; and Laird John was this man, and

bravely did he perform his part. True, within his remote cottage, under its simple roof of thatch and sod, he had his beautiful and devoted wife Janet, with three infant children, to cheer his hours of rest, and charm his rude hearth.

“ There’s a cottage on Coningstoun Moor to the west ;
And a wife sits sewing and singing there ;
And she rocks her babe in its cradle to rest
With lullaby words to a lullaby air.

There’s a footstep comes nearing the lone cottage-door,
That step to the wife is the welcomest sound ;
And scarce has he crossed o’er his threshold before
Two arms round the forester’s neck are wound.”

And how truly beautiful was it to see, in a wilderness of moors, far removed from every other human dwelling, this young and beloved wife and mother, who had followed him from a home of grandeur and affluence to this bare habitation, awaiting his evening return from the day of labour, or straying out to meet him in the distance, without a cloud on her brow, and seating herself upon some grassy knoll with her smiling babes, unconscious of their fate, prattling by her side amongst the wild daisies and heather bells. What

feminine heroism was here ! and what a conjunction of heroic hearts dwelt under this thatched roof ! Yet, how many similar examples of true and unrecorded heroism—excelling immeasurably thousands of those yearly bruted aloud in the columns of our newspapers—are to be witnessed and learned of in the humble cottages of the land ? He only can tell who steps aside from his path to enter their thresholds.

But though John's worldly prospects were thus cruelly crushed under the iron heel, his mind knew no abasement, and it quailed not. He had read much, and to advantage, and had stored up many of the noblest maxims and practical lessons recorded in ancient and modern history. He used to humorously compare his condition, always advantageously to himself, when friendly sympathy for his reverse of fortune was expressed, with that of divers kings who had toppled down from mighty thrones into the mire of oblivion ; and assuredly, had the saying, as reported of Louis Philippe of France, been in circulation at

the time—"that he was the most independent sovereign of Europe because he could brush his own boots"—John would have avowed himself the better man, since he could not only brush his own boots, but earn them likewise. He possessed a singularly retentive memory, and besides reading, he used to while away his evenings by repeating to his wife and children whole poems, and relating events in history. Half the old popular ballads and traditions, then in and out of print, he could deliver at a moment's notice. To vary this occupation, he would become listener, in turn, to the charming voice of his Janet, while she sang to him, with exquisite effect, some of the touching airs and stirring songs of the Highland and Jacobite clans. But while John indulged his taste with these innocent pastimes, he invariably dedicated a portion of the evening to devotional duty. "The Cottager's Saturday Night," so truly pourtrayed by Burns, was that of every night with him. And what a beautiful and impressive picture of actual life was here presented to the

Christian ear and eye ! Within the rugged walls of this solitary habitation, two human voices blending harmoniously over a short psalm or hymn to the praise and glory of their Creator—the loving husband and wife, with their little infants taught to kneel, joined together on their bended knees in fervent prayer, and pouring out their grateful acknowledgment, even in the face of their scanty share now of the world's goods, to the Almighty for the bounty and wealth that yet abideth with them—the wealth of health, love, and resignation to their present lot.

What a salutary lesson was here for the languishing and discontented of the rich, and for such a sum of nature's own genuine wealth would not many of our pallid and plethoric millionaires freely exchange half their coffers ?

We have spoken of heroism in this sphere, and in connection with this family.

We will now select an instance or two from the many genuine at our command.

K—— was at least half a day's journey from any

market-town, and while Laird John was labouring manfully in the fields, his partner at home had determined, so far as her inexperience would permit, to perform the part of a good housewife. Accordingly, from stern necessity, she had so far overcome her original diffidence and timidity, as to occasionally proceed alone to this place to obtain such articles of use as could not be supplied to her in a poor village some miles nearer home. Commonly, upon such occasions, her small children were left under the care of a young girl whom she kept as a sort of servant and messenger. Now it happened, while upon one of these journeys, that the weather underwent a sudden change, and rain fell in torrents, which detained her in the small town for several hours after her small business had been concluded. The streets and roads were soon inundated, and so great and sudden was the deluge, that the streams and rivers in the country, by the rush of water from the hills, were immediately flooded.

Between this place and Janet's home flowed

one of the largest of these, which, on the morning of the same day she had crossed, as usual, upon stone steps, placed about two feet apart, and extending in a straight line between its opposite banks. The rain had no sooner ceased than Janet was upon the road, picking her footsteps through the trickling pools, with her parcel in her hand. Upon reaching the river she became utterly appalled. The stone steps were buried some feet deep in the turbid water. Her heart sank within her, and her slender frame shook as she stood upon the brink of the torrent, which now cut her off from her home; and the agony of her mind was painfully increased by the consciousness that the darkness of the evening must soon overtake her. She had just travelled over a dreary tract of moor, and beyond the river, could she even by any miracle pass it, there must be traversed several miles more of the same almost trackless lands. Nor was her commotion lessened when she bethought herself of her husband's fears and anxiety at such a critical hour.

"What *shall* I do this night?" she exclaimed in despair, as she cast a glance homeward.

"Ma leddy, I'll soon tell ye what to do," answered a sturdy and athletic man in the prime of life.

The man had observed her from a distance advancing to the river, and dreading that she, ignorant of the danger, might venture in, hastened to the spot, and such was the commotion in her breast, that she had been unable to hear even the bold tread of his feet behind her.

"Ye maun sit doon on that auld green mouldy-hallock there," he continued; "it's a wee-bit wat wi' the spait o' rain, but I'll gie ye this auld tap-coat t' pit under ye; an' ye mauna stur a foot, or offer to gang near the water, till I come back t' ye."

With all this Janet readily complied, without even asking a question.

The man then left her, and proceeded to a cottage which he occupied, hidden by trees, in the vicinity; but he had scarcely disappeared till he

was again seen cantering back upon a strong horse.

“Now, ma leddy,” again said he, blithely, “ye’ve maybe no been used to ride bare-backet, an’ sae I hae fetched a sack t’ pit under ye, tied to the saddle. But afore ye loup up ahint me, which ye can do frae the end o’ that bit stane wa’, I’ll first try the ford bee masel.”

The ford was tried, but after the horse had gone up to the breast in the stream, and been nearly floated from his footing, he was guided back. The flood was too great, and the current too strong, for the animal’s weight and strength.

“It’ll no do, mistress,” said the brave fellow, on his return from defeat; “I winna risk ye on the beast’s back. But ye mauna pit yersel about; for if the warst come t’ the warst, ye can gang hame wi’ me, an sleep wi’ the gudewife, an’ I’ll gang to the bawx among the hens”—meaning thereby a bed in the stable-loft.

But humble as was Janet’s home, her heart was within its rude walls. Was there no

other way or bridge, however far off, she earnestly inquired, by which she could get over the river?

“Indeed, I wus there was, for yer sake,” was the reply; “but there’s nae brig within oor reach for this night; hoosever, if ye are sae bent on another trial, an’ ‘ill no be affronted at ma axin’ ye on to ma back, I’s warrant ye I’ll take ye across, an’ no weet a steek o’ yer claise.”

Janet blushed, but said she would try it; whereupon he rode sharply off, and soon returned with two long round poles upon his shoulders, which he termed “stilts.” They had brackets, or rests for his feet fastened upon them, at about four feet from the one end, and five from the other, and were hooped with iron at the bottom. Their owner now closely examined them, then asked Janet if she would let him have her parcel; which done, he raised it to his shoulders, and tied it in front under his chin. He next walked to the end of a stone wall close at hand, mounted his stilts, and strode off, like some vast Titan,

with long, lean, round legs, towards the river. The anxious woman's eyes could not follow him, but after a pause she cast a glance to the river, and much to her relief, she saw the brave man on the opposite bank placing her parcel, the frugal memorial of her day of trouble, upon a rude pile of stones, which had been erected, at some previous time, for the purpose of enabling him to mount his stilts, he being in the habit of crossing the river in this manner. He was soon again by her side, and she observed that his feet and legs were wet up to his knees.

"Now," said he, "I'm afraid the darkness will be doon upon us; sae if ye'll just let me help ye t' the tap o' that stone wa,' an' take care ye dinna fa' afore I mount ma wooden horse again, then I'll turn ma back, an' ye'll get on to it; an' I maun tell ye no to haud me ower tight aboot the neck, for I'll want a' my wund, but ye maun keep a good grip o' ma shouthers, for I'll no hae an arm to spare to haud ye masel."

It was a trying moment for poor Janet.

She had courage enough to face the swollen river, for it flowed between her and her noble husband, her home, and her little babes, but there was a silent struggle warring in her bosom, between the exigent circumstances and her sense of female delicacy and propriety. It was not, however, a time for hesitation ; and, half insensible of the danger before her, she leant herself forward to the broad back of this stalwart hero. Away he stalked with her, as stately and steadily as walks the cameleopard.

“ Now, ma leddy,” said he, as they approached the river, “ ye maun close yer een, for fear ye grow dizzy, an’ haud yer feet as well up as ye can, for the water’s a thought deeper than I bargained for ; an’ dinna stur, if ye can help it, for I maun keep ma balance”

Janet acquiesced, with a tremulous voice and quivering frame, but lay as if she were a lifeless burden. The heroic man now enters the flood. What a scene of oppressive interest for a spectator !—the water is fast lessening the space be-

tween its surface and his feet—he presses on unswervingly—deeper and deeper they go—miss but one step and a watery grave awaits them both. They have reached the middle, and Janet's feet are covered with the water—not a sway in the figure, not a syllable is uttered, but the Titan toils with the appalling current. Steadily, as at first, he ploughs his way—his feet again appear above the flood—a minute more and Janet is safely landed on the opposite brink.

“Hoot, toot,” says the honest fellow, as Janet expresses her deep sense of gratitude, “the only acknowledgment I wad accept wad be a kiss o’ yer bonnie cheek—never mindin’ what the gudewife would say when I telled her—but as Laird John is no present t’ see ye didna cheat me, I winna hae the rights o’ confidence wranged.”

“Do you know my husband?” she inquired.

“That I do,” said he; “an’ wad be glad to ser’ him in any way I could. But,” he continued, ‘ye mauna make twa payments o’ yer

thanks, for ma wark's no dune yet. After I've got ye ower the warst, I'm no goin' t' leave ye to lose yer way amang the muirs an' be drowned i' the bog's holes."

He now laid down his stilts, took up the parcel, and with a blunt grace presented his arm to Janet as if she were a queen, who accepted it, not without endeavouring to decline it on the plea of causing so much trouble to him; and the two proceeded in the direction of her home.

They had not advanced far when they were met by her husband, who had been for hours frantic, on account of the flooded state of the river, which he had seen from a distance when it first arose, and had been travelling backwards and forwards upon the moor ever since.

The final close of this scene we must leave for the conception of the reader, together with the astonishment, joy, and gratitude of Laird John. The name of the courageous performer with the stilts was William Palmer, a man well known in his parish for such daring exploits. And we

have the story as it was told by the heroine herself in her old age ; and although it has been herein related after our own fashion, it is entirely divested of exaggeration.

The next incident is one in which John himself was the chief performer.

He was mowing hay in a grassy bog in the open moors, when he heard the roar of an excited bull, which had left a herd of cattle, grazing under the care of a shepherd, within about half a mile of where he was at work. The animal was in furious pursuit of a young woman who was crossing the moor by a footpath, and shouting vehemently to John, while making all the speed in her power to reach him. He instantly dropped his scythe, snatched off the “straik,”—a short but strong wooden instrument, pitched and sanded on either side, with which he whetted his scythe—and ran to her rescue. Meantime the bull was gaining fast upon her.

“ Throw down your shawl,” shouted John—he had no time to give a reason.

She tore it from her shoulders, and the brute, on coming to it paused, as the anxious man had expected, gave a stifled roar, put down his nose and smelled it, trod on it, then raising his head, and with a lash of his tail, again bounded on. By this time John had reached the girl, and had drawn her in behind him. Fortunately, at this critical moment he had been able to arm himself, in addition to his straik, with a stone of about two pounds in weight. He now awaited coolly the approach of the furious animal, which, however, upon seeing the fearless attitude of his challenger, at once diminished his speed, but still proceeded to charge him. John, on the other hand, allowed the brute to get sufficiently close to him to make sure of his first blow from the stone. The missile was thrown with unerring effect—the animal was stunned ; in rushed the brave man, and charged him heavily with his other weapon upon the head, horns, and muzzle. Still the determination of the brute, though taken aback, seemed unabated. His opponent per-

cieving this, and apprehensive that his “club” would fail him, being already split, he sprung to his tail, seized it, and dealt him some lusty blows upon his sides. The fury of the animal was now waxed into madness. It jumped, ran, roared, and twisted his body in all manner of ways to shake off his antagonist, but all was in vain. John was as swift and as active as the monster, and as soon might it expect to twist off its own tail as to wrest it from the grasp of its adversary. John knew, moreover, that he had better wind and lasting qualities, and, like the Great Napoleon, trusted to time to befriend him.

He therefore plyed him soundly with the cudgel, leaving him no breathing-time, so long as he would continue the struggle.

At length he began to show signs of “trouble”—a few struggles more and his mighty powers were exhausted, his fierce fury gone, and he now stood immovable as a whipped child.

To his victor he presented truly a pitiful picture.

His huge sides were heaving to their utmost, his eyes reddened, his mouth foaming, his tongue lolling out, and he was now gasping for air.

John now let go his tail, and gave him a slight tap upon the horns. The brute merely shook his head faintly.

The Cretan bull, by the son of Almena, could not have been more speedily and effectively subdued.

When left, the animal laid himself down on the spot, and for hours after could not be induced by his keeper to move from it. Nor was this bull ever known to attack man or woman afterwards.

One exploit more, and we will spare the reader.

John's activity and unwearied perseverance had not been long without their reward ; and at the time of the present incident he was the master of a considerable farm in Roxburghshire, together with a corn-mill, and possessed two or three pairs of good draught-horses, with several cows and other stock.

Dalkeith, in Midlothian, over forty miles distant, was then the great market town ; and at that period it was the custom of the millers and farmers, even in Berwickshire and Roxburghshire, to transmit their grain-produce to this famous mart.

In those old-fashioned days it was also a habit with many of the frugal farmers to accompany or drive a pair of their own horses thither.

This was frequently the case with Laird John.

The market was held early in the morning, and to be forward in good time was the safest way of insuring the top prices.

It happened, upon one of those journeys, that John, on arriving at the foot of Soltra Hill—a high range of wild moor in Lauderdale, and well known in the coaching times as the scene of many a sad disaster—found a whole host of horses and men, from different parts, brought to a complete stand. The carts were all heavily laden, there being a customary weight allotted to each. The cause of this occurrence was that a sharp

frost among the hills had suddenly set in, for which none of the horses had been roughed or prepared.

The steep ascent had been repeatedly tried by several of the group, but they had all been unsuccessful.

Upon learning this, John asked permission to drive past, and make an attempt likewise.

“ Make way for the Laird,” shouted some of the men, and he passed on amid winks and smiles.

He, however, found that, with their present load his horses could not proceed. He then draws his carts a little aside, took a sack of meal upon his back, weighing twenty stones, from one of them, and carried it to the top of the steepest part of the hill—about half a mile in length. There he put it down, returned to his horses, and taking another from the other cart, he again put their heads to the road.

Up they went, straining and slipping at every step, he guiding the foremost animal on the way, with this load upon his shoulders.

"Now, lads," said he, as he thus moved off, "take a bit laugh now, and keep yourselves warm."

Such a feat was never known upon the road before, and upon his appearance in the market, altogether unexpected, owing to the state of the roads, and the absence of all his southern neighbours, he was heartily cheered by the merchants and his friends, by whom he was much esteemed. But what was more gratifying to John than popular applause was, that he received on that morning half-a-crown per sack, upon his compliment, more than was afterwards paid to the later comers.

CHAPTER VIII.

LORANCE LANGTON MEETS JOHN DODS.

OUR companion is again in the saddle. He has made some agreeable pedestrian excursions in the vicinity of his hostelry, and is now setting out upon an exploratory expedition among the neighbouring hills, and has ordered dinner at six.

There is a beautiful sky overhead; the air is fresh and balmy, and filled with the music of singing-birds and piping insects. Kate looks blithe and frisky, and seems equally ready with her rider for any frolic that may turn up.

The elastic turf is again under her hoof, and the course taken is westward.

On the left, Dirrington-law rises majestically in the distance, towering into the blue sky like an Olympian throne for the gods, and calmly asserting her dominion over the lesser aspirants around her. There is a scald-spot or cicatrix on her head, denoting that, as in ancient Athenæ, peace had not always reigned here among the Caledonian deities; and that the fiery bolts of some kilted Jupiter, or the scorching ashes of a nude knee'd Vulcan, had left their indelible traces to posterity.

As the horseman proceeds he observes a countryman dressed in a blue coat, corduroy small-clothes, fastened with brass buttons at the knees, gray stockings, a blue "bonnet" on his head, and bearing a spade upon his shoulder.

The man politely raises his hand to his cap, and opens a gate in front of the rider, through which he must pass on his way forward.

Acknowledging this civility, he inquired the

name of a lofty hill, at a little distance from him on his right hand.

“That, sir,” answered the man, “that, sir, is the Main-slaughter-law, where there was yince a great battle fought atween the Scots an’ English, an’ the maist o’ the slaughter fell oot on the tap, an’ it has aye been ca’d bee that name since syne ; an’ that, sir,” he continued, “that auld gray biggin’ ye see at the fit there, is Cranshy Castle ; but it’s no ‘habited nou wi’ onything but kays an’ boggles ; an’ that place on the tother side o’ us, doon low among the wuds where ye see the reek, is Lockermaykiss, where I gang to the preachin’ ; an’ thae tway-three hooses on that green hill afore us, is Whinrig ; an’ Rawburn is a wee west o’t ; an’ Westeruther is sooth o’ that again ; an’ Kettle-shiel eastard ; an’ there was yince a place, nether the fit o’ the Law there, ca’d Kippitlaws, but it’s a’ doon nco—ma wife yince lived at it ; an’ this ahint us is Hairheid ; an’ ower the hill there, an’ up the haughs, is Byrecleugh, where the gude laird o’ Melliston, an’ his bonny leddie, an’ braw

bairns, often come to, an' stayed i' the strawberry-time, an' when the heather is in blume for the chincough, but the bonniest blume o' the valley was the leddy an' her bairns."

Here the listener was reluctantly induced to interrupt the good-natured and loquacious man—whom, ere now, he began to consider a "character" of his kind, and an exception to many of those dry, awkward, and laconic countrymen commonly met with of his class,—fearing lest he should extend his topographical discourse over the whole country.

From his knowledge, however, of the surrounding district, and having moreover named the very place where his kinsman had for some years resided, of whose representatives he was now in search, and deeming that his information thereby might prove serviceable to his cause, he at once resolved to continue the parley.

"But, my good friend," interrupted the traveller, as the other was proceeding, "you

have not yet pointed out to me where you yourself live."

"O, as to that, sir," he replied, "I dinna think it worth the while ; but it's ower the hill there, on the waiter Dye."

"And now," added the other, "since you have given me so much agreeable information, will you excuse me in asking your name?"

"If that'll interest ye, sir, it's John, but mair commonly Johnnie Dods."

In his answer to the last two questions, there appeared, as Lorance thought, a slight change in the tone of the man's voice ; and apprehending that he had somewhat wounded his pride by the interruption made to his previous harangue, he now determined upon removing, if possible, this impression, and restore him to his former humour. Having snatches of verse or old ballads in abundance to suit almost every occasion, he thought the present a favourable opportunity for making trial of a few lines.

"Johnnie Dods!" he humourously exclaimed.
"Why, I have known your name since I was a
child; it is immortalised by the bards of your
country—

"O mother, onybody, onybody, onybody;
O mother, onybody but a creashy weaver:
Johnnie Dods, or onybody, onybody, onybody;
Johnnie Dods, or onybody but a creashy weaver."

"Weel, I never heard the like o' that!—Oh, I
ax yer pardon, sir!" interjected Johnnie, his face
distorted by stress of laughing—"I beg yer par-
don for ma ill-mauners; but am so surprised to
hear that old hamely sang frae a Soothern's lips,
an' as weel said as if he had been bred among the
herds and muir-cocks o' the hills."

"You have, then, heard the song before, John?"
rejoined the other, pleased to notice its effects
upon the listener.

"Ay, mair frequent than I could tell ye of afore
sunset," he answered, recovering his propriety as
best he could. "Ailey, ma wife at hame, whiles
sings it to me, an' whiles croons it to hersel i' ma

hearin', when I am doon i' the mouth, or a wee dour at her ; but it's no often am that—an' then she keeks nou an' then at me, t' see hoo I take wi 't."

"Then you gallantly give in, John ?"

"Of coorse I do; but no frae gallantry, sir."

"From duty, then."

"Na, na, sir—no frae that neither; but frae something else womankind places aboon baith o' them, an' that's affection ; an' I may tell ye, sir, though ye yebblins ken it yersel, it's no easy to haud lang oot against the wiles o' the wife ye love. It's like fightin' against natur, an' against yinsel. Excuse me, sir," he continued with some gravity, "but I dinna think muckle o' thae marriages where a couple o' Christians are put into the double yoke, an' like a pair o' horses i' the harrows, only pull tightly thegether frae the strength o' the chains that bind them, an' the whup o' Duty that ca's them on."

"John, you are a philosopher," said Lorance,

laughing—"come, I must crave a little more of your acquaintance while I am staying in these wild parts. Where are you now going, if it be not too rude a question?"

"The feent o' rudeness is aboot it, or aboot yersel, sir, I's answer for 't," replied the man, briskly; "I'm gaen doon the brae there, t' mend up a slap in an auld fail dyke."

"Could you defer it till to-morrow?"

"Ay, weel enough, sir."

"Then come along, and guide me through that valley and these wild woods before us, and I shall make up for your loss of time."

"That I will, wi' a' ma heart; but as to the bit time, it's neither here nor there," added John; so off they marched together.

From this moment, by virtue of John's appointment, he seemed to translate the entire care of the expedition from the shoulders of his trust to those of himself, and thought it his duty to entertain him with all the information he could impart by the way.

"That's the waiter Dye afore us, sir," he remarked, after they had proceeded some distance, "that flows doon among thae wuds there, an' the braes are gye stie on baith sides. It 'll be safer for ye t' get off, an' I'll lead the best asklent a wee."

"Thank ye ; is it a good troutting stream ?" inquired the other.

"Aye, mony a gude bull-troot I hae ta'en oot o't," was the reply.

"Then you are an angler, John ?"

"Na, na, sir ; I hae nae time for that fulish wark."

"How catch them, then ?"

"When the waiter's sma' I whiles gump them —that is, I take them wi' ma ain hands ; an' where the pules are no ower deep, I slip the troot-net round them i' the haulds."

"I am shocked, John," said Lorance, with a smile.

"Ye see that scaur-brae there, sir—weel, at the bottom there's a grand pule for a trout or salmon

after a flude ; an' whiles at night i' the close-time,
I take ma leister an' a bit light, made o' an auld
tar-barrel, an' come doon the brae wi' a freend,
an' take tway or three thumpers hame wi' me."

"I am more shocked than ever, John," returned his listener, putting on a look of seriousness, though much amused by the simple exposition of his lawless practices ; which, however, in those times were not looked upon, even in the eyes of the local administrator of the law, with the same shade of culpability as the present day ; and the offence might be regarded as somewhat condoned by a standing usage in these remote parts.

The singular doctrine that the "fowls of the air and fish of the sea" (the stream being thrown into the bargain)—"belonged to the Lord and not to man," was a maxim then very prevalent among the hills, as elsewhere. Yet, with a strange inconsistency in their logic, the advocates of it did not scruple to purloin from the Divine owner !

"To complete your character, John," added Lorance, "you have only to add to it the sister-virtue of land-poaching likewise."

"Weel, sir, in that case, it's already completed," retorted John, with a humorous look, "for the gude wife at hame now an' then treats me, like the quality, t' a pat' o' hare-soup, an' doesna gang far t' merket for 't. I whiles indulge in a bit patraik too; but the muircocks an' hens are a wee thing ower quick an' wild for me, except when they come doon frae the hills to the corn stooks; then I get ahint the dykes, an' let fly amang the thick o' them, an' whiles get tway or three at a shot. But I canna shute fleein', an' when I take a maukin it's commonly when she's clappet doon or sittin' on her hurdies."

"Fie! shame, John Dods!"

He next related how sometimes during a snow-storm he got a hare. When the snow was soft, he coursed her with a swift colly-dog; and when hard, he put out a cabbage from his garden, or put up "rips" of unthrashed oats, the

roots of the straw being stuck down into the snow, and then lay in wait till the game came to feed, when he shot it. Upon one of these occasions a neighbour played a sad trick upon him. It was a moonlight night, and this person had been out in search of a shot, and, on passing John's garden, he observed the lures thus set. He immediately went to a rick of turf, took therefrom a piece of sod about the size of a hare, stuck it down by the side of one of the handfuls of corn, and went off. Shortly afterwards, John crawled down behind the wall among the snow, and, taking a patient aim, fired and ran forward ; but, to his great chagrin, he found, instead of a hare, a piece of his own turf.

Thus did his guide entertain our hero during their passage across the course of the Dye, a crystal stream, small in size, but of exquisite beauty, rippling and sparkling with wild and fairy effect over its bed of pebbles, as it flows here through a densely-wooded valley, clothed chiefly with birch, hazel, alder, sallow, and mountain-ash.

"A fine place this, sir," said the guide, while leading the horse through a thicket in which he was nearly stuck fast, "a fine place for a buss o' wands; they make capital tatta-creels and beeskeps, though am no a witch at makin' them masel. But there's yin up at Whinrig there that makes the best i' the countryside. He is a grand mower and sheerer, an' can work the double o' ony other man I ever saw take the spade in his hand. He has a large family, an' sae to help him he cuts the wands for ordinar, an' makes the creels an' skeps i' the lang nights an' wat or wunter days, an' sells them to ony o' the country-folks that want the like."

The wanderers, now leaving the Dye and traversing a large enclosure of coarse pasture, came upon another but smaller stream, called the Watch, a tributary of the former, which it joined at a short distance on their left. John, whose store of information of its kind seemed as inexhaustible as his powers of uttering it, had some-

thing favourable to say with respect to its special properties also.

"This, sir," says he, "is a gude burn for sma' troots and eels; an' thae braes are the best I ken o' for nuts, an' no bad for a mavis or cushy-doo nest; an' i' the spring time they are covered wi' the bonniest primroses I ever saw. A gye bit farther up there's a corby-craw's nest on a tree, which the auld yins hae frequented for a hunder years. It's no canny, the folks say, to meddle wi't. A callent about twenty years syne, speel'd the tree t' herry the eggs, for the hen was sittin', an' when he was just at the nest, the auld yin cam' an' flew thrice round, an' caw'd at him, an' he fell to the bottom an' brak his neck. About five year ago, a gamekeeper cam to shute her, an' when he fired, the lock flew off the gun, an' no yin could ever find it."

"The crow had been a metamorphosed witch, John," said Lorance, greatly amused by the rambling discourse, and the tincture of superstition evinced in the mind of his guide.

"Feigh, sir," John replied, "we hae a wutch nearer hand us. Ye see that hollow i' the face o' the brae there—they ca' that Bessy's Hole. Weel, sir, there's been an auld crone scuddin' up an' doon, oot an' in, to that place since lang afore ma grandfather's time. She's whiles seen like a wul-cat, an' heard screaming at night in the wuds, as if some yin was murderin' her; the neest time she's i' the shape o' a hare wi' a white ring roond her neck, made bee the number o' girns (snares) she has broken; for they canna girn her."

"Have they never tried to hunt her, John?" said the patient listener.

"Hunt her! sir," he exclaimed; "why a' the dougs of the parishen hae been tried, an' hoonded after her, but when she does let ony o' them up, they canna haud her, an' dinna thrive the better for the attempt. The minister o' Shuttlehaugh, pious man, yince cam to try a pair o' fine spotted grews (greyhounds) at her. Weel, they searched the Hole, an' every spot they could think o' near it, but 'ma granny' wasna 'at hame.' An' where

d'ye think they faund her? Just as they were turnin' to leave off an' gang hame, an' when the minister was rebukin' the folks for their supposed superstition—for mony o' the parish had gaen t' see fair play—up got the auld crone afore the dougs' noses, frae under a big stane. Away she scuddled up a lee-rig, the grews at full bang after her, though it is said she was never visible to mair than yae doug at a time; an' when the foremost cam up to her, she let him gie her a turn or tway, then take hauld o' her hip; but the doug was lief to let go, an' left a' his teeth sticken in her skin. The minister, horse an' a', tumbled heels-ower-heed, on a moudi-hallock, as a judgment, it was thought, an' the doug ne'er ate anither bane. Sae ye see, sir, it's no safe t' either make light or meddle wi' sic things."

" Did they never try a shot upon her?"

" Ay, hunders o' times, but the lead-draps just rattled like hailstains on her back without hurting a hair on't."

“ Why not put a silver bullet in the gun ?”

“ The laird o’ Lokermaykiss tried it, sir, wi’ a crooked saxpense, but it went through her lug, an’ did nae mair, an’ the hole is there to this day. Whust ! I thought I heard her pantin’ ahint that bus there ; an’ if she heard us saying onything again her she didna like, as shure as am a man, something would happen t’yin or baith o’ us afore we gat hame. Yin would miss his way, fa’ i’ the waiter, lose a knife, or the like. She’s no vera ill wulled, but it’s weel to be on the safe side, an’ to hae a bit roan-tree twig i’ yin’s hand when yin gangs into thae wuds. At hame I aye keep a bit roan-tree bus growing i’ my yard t’ make the wutch keep her distance frae the cabbage an’ the hoose.”

Thus the worthy guide, faithful to his trust, conducted and entertained Lorance Langton through that intricate part of his route, which, marked with a charming wildness, the course of the two remote streams just noticed. As they had reached a rough cart-road, leading directly to

a farm house, which had previously been intended to form the extreme of the day's journey, the services of the former were no longer required, the latter here, dropping five shillings into his hand, relieved him from further duty.

"That's ower muckle, sir," said the honest man, as he turned his eyes on the silver pieces. The other moved a pace or two onward to proceed, but he must not yet go before he receives a repetition of certain instructions already tendered to him, respecting his return home by a less difficult way: "Ye'll just follow this track, sir, doon to the parish road, an' till ye come to Lockermaykiss, then haud straight up the Herrinton turnpike till ye see the Minslaughter-law, and then airth ower to the right a wee sooth o' Hairhead, as ye cam."

"Thank ye, John. I'll not forget my instructions," answered the other with a smile, as he again put the mare into motion. But the assiduous guide must needs have another word.

"As ye gang ower the Lockermaykiss brig,

sir, dinna forget to gie a keek doon the waiter Dye, an' ye'll there see yin o' the wonders o' the world."

"What is that, John?" said the horseman, again tightening his reins, in expectation of hearing something droll.

"It's an awfu' big stane, lyin' fair i' the middle o' the waiter. It's nine feet high, an' aboot twenty roond the middle, an' it has lain there, in spite o' a' the fludes, for hunders o' years."

"How came it there?"

"It was flung there bee a giant, at yae throw, frae St. Abb's Head (a distance of twenty miles), an' had it gaen a wee wheen yards farther, it wad hae hit its mark, an' there had been nae mair need for manses and ministers."

"What was the mark, John?"

"It was the de'il, sir, the folks say."

"And how did this occur?"

"The giant was hired by the monks to guard the abbey o' Cowdingame against enemies an'

freebooters, an' had charge o' the treasury ; an' it happened that he an' the de'il were playing cards on a Sunday for a sackfu' o' goold a side, an' the de'il cheated, at which the giant flew in a rage, an' demanded the game ower again ; but the de'il upset the table on the giant's feet—it was a large flat stane, the size o' a kirk floor—which held him fast by the taes for a time, while the other snatched up under his oxters the tway sackfu's o' guineas, an' flew right westward wi' his lade. When growin' tired wi' the burden, he 'lighted doon to rest himsel i' the haugh, a wee bit ayont the *buller*, for the brig wasna built then. Weel, sir, the giant, i' the meantime, whammelled the table off his taes, an' right ower the brae into the sea, an' it was never seen mair ; then seized the stane he was sittin' on, an' wi' a great swing o' his airm, hurled it into the sky after the de'il ; an' it would hae hit him, too, had it been thrawn a wee thing suner or a thought farther—sae the auld folks tell." The throw of

the rock by the Cyclop at Ulysses was nothing to this feat.

“And this huge stone was used by the giant as a ‘cracky-stool’ at the gaming-table--eh, John ?” said the grave listener.

“Yes, sir ; an’ the giant tuke sic a firm grip o’t wi’ his hand, that he left his thum an’ four finger merks upon the stane, which were seen on’t up to ma grandfather’s time.”

“Are these marks not upon it now?”

“Na, sir, the fludes an’ the weather hae worn them off nou.”

“Well, John, I shall have a look at the wonderful stone ; so good day to you,” and off the traveller rode.

CHAPTER IX.

A STRANGE INCIDENT.

LEFT to himself, our traveller now proceeded leisurely onward to the farm of Rawburn. On his left arose an extensive hill by an easy acclivity, until it rounded off at a considerable elevation, where it would seem to have laid itself down to sleep and rest till the end of time, gathered under its ancient mantle of brown heath and purple flower; while over its bosom the wild bees held their honey harvest, and moths and merry dancers disported joyously. Skirting the

road on his right, lay the more precipitous banks or braes of the Watch, which here were picturesquely clothed with the white birch, the hazel, and other indigenous trees and brushwood ; the blueberry and sloe hanging plentifully on their stalks. In the valley below, the crystal rivulet, now diminished by the summer drought, trilled and prattled laughingly amongst its shining pebbles, now resting in a pool, now racing over the channel to reach another. Though the “concert season” of the singing birds had passed away, the voice of many wild warblers was still heard in the grove. To its faithful mate the cushat was telling its tale of unalterable love ; in the sky the lark was singing merrily, the finch and linnet vying sweetly with each other, the redbreast and wren filling up the pauses ; while the speckled thrush flung occasionally his golden tones into the choir, with the blithesome notes of the blackbird chiming in the chorus.

The susceptibilities of our hero, his nice appreciation of the wild and beautiful in nature, could

not be contented with a mere passing glance of this enchanting scene; and, drawing up his horse upon a point commanding a full view of a grassy dell, bespangled with bright daisies and primroses, and encompassed by drooping boughs of the graceful birch and mountain ash, now red with its clustering berries, he paused for a time, and remained in a mute and dreamy state. “Surely,” said he to himself, after a brief lapse, “if ever a Supreme agency, fable or fancy, peopled with fairies, fawns, elves, or other sylvan creatures, any one spot upon this fair earth, this wild dell ought to be that spot. Oberon must indeed hold his reign here.”

He had scarcely muttered over these words, when he beheld a small human figure emerging from the leafy boughs that fringed the open space, and tripping lightly into the centre, stretched itself down to rest upon a bed of flowers. Its head was uncovered, but it held a small cap in one hand; its hair was dark and smooth, and it was clothed like a male child, and

had the appearance of a slender boy about the age of five years. Sadly addicted to heresy in all things appertaining to the supernatural, yet cherishing a vague reverence for many of the fanciful creations of the mythological progeny of bygone ages, Lorance Langton looked upon this embodiment in human form with an interest of a peculiar kind. That it was a brownie, fay, or elf, or other wild denizen of the wood or stream, he could not for a moment believe. Yet that a common child of such tender years should be seen disporting in the sun alone, and in so sequestered a spot, so far removed from every human dwelling—for house or cot there was none within the whole range of these wild woodlands—appeared to him also incredible. To such a degree, however, was his curiosity aroused, that he bethought himself of dismounting, and of wending his way down the steep bank under cover of some trees, in order to gratify it by a closer inspection of the tiny object.

Having so far effected this purpose, and cross-

ing the stream, he stole softly onward behind a bordering thicket, through which, himself unseen, he could observe every motion of the little creature within the open space. But before he had reached his hiding-place, he discovered, in a sunny and sheltered spot, some material indications of its connection, as he thought, with our common flesh and blood. These consisted of a small elastic rod of the mountain-ash, obviously a sapling recently cut from the growing root, to the taper end of which was fastened a line of linen thread, bearing a crooked pin, after the fashion of a fishing-hook. By the side of this lay a tin cup, containing some worms and small minnows, all parched and shrivelled ; and, at the distance of a few feet from these there stood, placed upon flat stones, three miniature hives or “skeps,” made of straw and laced with split willows, in the manner of those in common use for garden-bees. Each of these was about the size of a child’s head ; and each contained a distinct family of the apine species. Within one was the buff-

coloured wild bee, in the next was the striped bee, and in the third was the black one, with red under the wing or over the abdomen. They had all, with their respective queens and combs, been taken from their nests in the woods, and thus domiciled within their elfin hives; and, singular to say, they were flying out and in with all the regularity and decorum of their domesticated cousins. A little on the rear of these, upon an overhanging bough, sat a wood-pigeon, evidently reclaimed from the wild state. It was a beautiful bird, shortened in the wings, with a white transverse patch on either side of the neck, and sitting at perfect ease, pluming itself in the sun. It, however, shewed some uneasiness at the approach of the stranger.

Lorance was singularly affected as he stood over these simple emblems of infantine taste, and of a mind that may yet be developed in the great world of mankind; and the interest was in no degree diminished towards the little creature, when he reflected upon the small hands he

doubted not had framed and fashioned these artless pieces of handicraft. He next moved lightly forward behind the screen of trees. The child is now on foot, and in close pursuit of a blue and speckled butterfly. The insect dances from flower to flower before him—now it rests—now he approaches it stealthily, with his cap in his hand—now a rush; but, ah! the tantalising beauty, like most beauties, escapes the pursuer; now it makes a longer flight; he follows it speedily—it rises aloft—he gazes after it—it disappears over the tops of the trees—he is out of breath, and now sits himself down upon a green knoll—his face is reddened by exertion, and he raises his little hands to wipe the perspiration from his brow. His countenance continues blithe, and he appears perfectly indifferent to disappointment; and while he thus rests, his eyes are running over the neighbouring flowers—a moment more, and he is again upon his feet. The fantastic little insect is once more in the gaudy dell. Between the two the same game is re-

newed. "This, how like the game of life with us all, pursuing our butterflies!" thought the spectator. Now it rests and expands its beautiful wings upon a dandelion—again he approaches it warily, and from his hand darts his cap—it does not rise—he springs forward, and the captive is in his hands. He now rises from his knees, for he had thrown himself down in securing the prize, and proceeds in the direction of his apiary. "Prettily done, my little fellow," muttered a voice in the ambuscade; "thus are resolution with man, patience and perseverance in the world, rewarded."

The sharp-eared little object caught the sound, and, in an instant, vanished from the speaker's sight.

"Don't be afraid," shouted Lorance, "I will not harm you. Come, my little dear," he added, "I wish to make you a present."

As well might Lorance Langton have called upon the startled fawn to stop in its course, as this timid and agile little inhabitant of these

wilds. It fled with no more sound upon its track than is awakened by the light-footed hare. The spectator, however, advanced a few paces in order to discover the course it had taken, and, to his utter amazement, seeing nothing of it on the ground below, he looked upwards and beheld its tiny form aloft upon a tree, and cowering like a squirrel amongst a clump of branches. He eyed it for a second, but spake not, dreading lest by doing so, an accident might occur to it from fright. He then led his horse back, remounted, and rode quietly off.

“This,” said he to himself, as he went on, “is surely a wonderful phenomenon in the disposition and instinct of a child. Truly it would seem to be a babe of the wood thoroughly wild. Nor shall I be contented till I learn more concerning it. Some persons in this thinly-populated district must have knowledge of it, and have it in their ill-keeping. If, however, I fail in my own inquiries, I will put John Dods upon the scent.”

With this he increased his pace, and soon left the fairy dell to the freedom of its inmate.

It was now about the hour of three in the afternoon, and after a lapse of some hours from the time of his departure from the banks of the Watch, that our traveller, on his return from the farmhouse to which his business had led him, was proceeding homeward by a considerable divergence from his former route, and as he was in the act of passing a small brook which crossed his path, and emptied itself at about a mile distant into the above stream, his attention was attracted to a small bird, whose manner indicated a state of agitation and trouble. It was the common tit-lark ; and it was chirping loudly, now alighting down, now rising up and flying round in repeated circles, confining its flight within a limited space. As the horseman advanced, the bird, while on the wing, almost touched his hat, then directed its course to a particular spot upon the verge of the brook, covered

with a mixture of rank grass and heath. As it flew over this spot it was observed to always turn its head downwards, and to indicate renewed signs of distress.

“Something must be disturbing the little thing’s nest,” thought our horseman, “and the helpless creature is supplicating my aid. Come, my little suppliant,” he added, “you shall not appeal to me in vain;” whereupon he turned round and directed his steps for a short space by the side of the trickling water. Soon his eyes alighted upon an object which awakened some interest. This was nothing else than a pair of small shoes and stockings, and two tiny garters, worked by needles, with a bunch of faded wild flowers, heaped closely together; and by the side of them lay three or four small trouts, stiffened and crusted over by the hot sun.

Now, chancing to have come upon these simple memorials within the neighbourhood of a populous village, or even an isolated cottage, would have been an occurrence unworthy of notice by the

passer-by. But found as they were here upon a desolate tract of moor, with no living creature in view, and without a tree, shrub, or habitation of any kind within the range of human sight, save a solitary house or two upon the top of a distant hill, with intervening woods and a stream of the wildest kind, they could not be looked upon with the same indifference; nor indeed without awaking some interest or emotion. For Lorance there was a simple pathos about them which touched his heart with inexpressible tenderness.

But the troubled bird pointed still higher up the brook, and, upon advancing, Lorance quickly observed the object of its terror. This was a spotted snake or adder, of the white and poisonous kind, stretched out to its full length upon the rough sward, basking in the sun. But a moment more transported his interest into a sensation of horror. Within the space of three feet from the reptile there lay, dead or asleep as it seemed, the extended body of a child, almost entirely screened

from view by the rank heath that surrounded it. The small head was first discernible, as it lay pillow'd upon its little arm, while the passing breeze slightly raised its thin hair as it swept over the surface of the brown heather. It was but the act of a second to spring from his saddle, leave the mare to herself, and to cautiously insinuate his steps between the snake and the motionless child. But he had no sooner dismounted than the sharp eyes of the reptile observed his motions, and it immediately stole away and disappeared within a small hole of the adjoining bank. Also, by the side of the human figure sat the dove of former notice, which now flapped its wings with apparent joy.

For a time the spectator stood motionless, gazing with feelings of intensity upon the face of the sleeping infant—for he now saw that it only slept—its features were regular and beautiful. There, in this desert, lay its little form, scarcely covering more space than the wild-hare on her rest—its eyelids immovably sealed by an over-

powering sleep, while perhaps it dreamed of—what? of a fond mother far away from its help—ay, perhaps at this moment wringing her hands in bitter anguish for her lost child. One of its small hands, soiled with clay, clasped loosely a few twigs of heather in bloom. Over the parting line of its closed lips there was one mass of dark flies, greedily sucking the blood and moisture from its mouth. Upon its exposed cheek there was a blistered line of red extending from the eye downwards. Can it have wept in this wilderness alone, he asked himself, where no one was near to assuage its young sorrow, to hear its little sobs, or dry its innocent tears? No one to answer to its despairing calls, to watch over it, to comfort it, or to sympathise with it? nothing but this wild lark and this reclaimed dove!

Its small feet and tiny toes lie there at their rest—no longer skipping through the daisies and primroses within the flowery dell by the crystal Watch; for in the child before us we have none other than the little agile creature we so lately

saw sporting there. Lorance Langton could no longer remain a dreaming, a passive spectator. He stooped down upon one of his knees, placed his arms about its waist and shoulders, and raised it from the ground. The flies fled from its mouth, and the blood flowed copiously from its lips.

"Robert! Robert, where am I?" cried the child, rubbing its eyes, and still unconscious of its state. "O! Robert, I have been lost. I came to seek you, but I lost myself."

"Whom do you call upon, my little child?" said Lorance, caressingly.

At the sound of his voice the infant opened its eyelids to their utmost expansion, and stared wonderingly in the face of the stranger. It then began to tremble and weep, as from fear, while its voice was already hoarse and weak from excessive crying.

"O, I thought it was Robert," it again said, turning its head away, and weeping. "Let me

down! let me down! I was not doing any harm."

"Harm!" ejaculated Lorance; "poor innocent and helpless thing. Harm!" and the tear rose upon his manly eye at this touching and artless appeal. "But who is Robert," said he, "upon whom you call? Tell me, and I will take you to him."

"He is my brother," answered the sobbing infant, "but I cannot find him."

"Was he here with you?"

"No, no, for he would not have left me here; he is with the yield beasts, far away among the hills."

"Come, then, my little fellow, do not weep any more, and I will take care of you till we find him."

The poor child now readily yielded itself up to its protector, who carried it, with the faithful dove, in his arms to the side of his patient mare, which had, throughout the enactment of this

singular scene, remained steadily cropping the tops of the rank heather. He now deliberated with himself what was best to be done. He be-thought first of returning with it to the farmhouse he had left, at a distance of two miles off. Then he thought of passing down to the banks of the Watch, with which it must be familiar, and from whence it would find its way to whatsoever home it had. Against this, however, his heart rebelled. At length he resolved upon conveying it to the small village on his way homeward, of which John Dods had spoken. He then put his foot to the stirrup, and sprung into his saddle with the tender charge before him, whose little bosom still throbbed with a spasmodic hiccup and deep-drawn sighs, while its dry and reddened eyes seemed to have exhausted their little wells of tears. Thus mounted, he now journeyed slowly onwards, deeming it prudent to allow the child to rest, and not to perplex it with questions —the dove folded within its little arms. He was

persuaded to this the more readily, because he thought its mind manifested a slight incoherence or wandering tendency, by its reiterated calls for a brother, who seemed only a creation of its troubled senses.

Steadily progressing in this manner, upon his route he came to a “stell”—a small circular space of moorland, surrounded by a high wall built entirely of stone with a turf-coping, and used for the folding at night of sheep or cattle in unenclosed districts. Within it he heard the sound of a voice, and looking over the fence, he observed a youth sitting upon a stone, with a dog by his side. Passing round to a gate, he beckoned to the lad, and inquired of him the shortest way to Lockermaykiss, and also whom the cattle belonged to. Both questions were readily answered ; and the latter was to the effect that the cattle were the property of a farmer and dealer, or drover, of the name of Robin Rawburn —that they had been purchased at some distance,

and driven thither, where they were to rest for a time; and that their owner was upon the road, and expected to overtake them at this place.

With this information Lorance resumed his journey. He had not, however, proceeded to the distance of half a mile when he met the said owner of the cattle, and in him at once recognised the shrewd and agreeable yeoman, to whom, as will be remembered, on a previous occasion, he had been indebted for some useful information respecting his journey to the rural inn, which had since become his temporary home. Amongst the many estimable qualities of this worthy individual—whom henceforth we shall address with his proper name of Robin Rawburn—was the pleasing one of modesty. He therefore, at their meeting, allowed the gentlemen to make the first overture to a recognition.

“ Weel, sir,” said Robin, after an exchange of salutations, and some gratulatory expressions had passed, “ I didna expect the pleasure o’ meeting you the day on this muir; mair especially wi’ a

little babbie in yer arms. Gude feigh, sir !” he continued, humorously, “I begin to think the cantankerous chield ye met wi’ i’ the east muirs was no sae unreasonable after a’, when he took ye for an ootright mosstrooper ;” upon which they both laughed heartily.

Lorance now related to him the circumstances under which he came into possession of the child, upon which his listener instantly changed countenance, and a tear trembled on his eye. The latter then approached more closely, and looked tenderly into its face, but did not recollect ever having seen its features in his travels.

“ But,” said he, resuming his blithe expression, “ it’s a bonnie little callent, an’ if nae better man will own it, although I never saw its mother, I’se warrant I’ll face brawly baith the minister and elders at the next kirk-session for its sake.”

“ But have you not a wife, Mr. Rawburn ?” inquired the other, humorously.

“ Ay, sir, that I hae, an’ yin I wad like t’ see ye afore the nou haddin’ that babbie, he ! he ! he !

—askie' yer pardon—but my will is my wife's will in whatever I undertake that is good or charitable ; an' a' the wrang I do is at my own instance, as lawair H——, of Dunse, said, when asked by the judge on whose behoof he appeared in a prosecution for damages, for Counsellor P——'s doug bitin' the tail off his sow, for pokin' its illegal nose where it had nae right t' be."

" But have you no children of your own ?" again inquired our traveller.

" Sax o' them, sir ; sax by marriage, an' if I'm t'hae this child ye hae carried away from the Fairies, as I apprehend, then I'll hae seven for the guid wife's sax ; and although the puir thing, it may be said by the neighbours, has come to me on the wrong side o' the bans, I'se warrant I'll no thrive the waur for that. An', my serty, sir," continued the humorous but humane drover, " Kirsty at hame would take better care o' the bairn than let it stray away, like a motherless lamb, i' the muirs, t' be either stung wi' ethers or eaten wi' corby crows."

In treating the matter with a little more gravity, it was concluded upon, as the best mode of disposing of the child until its parents or guardians should be discovered and apprised of its present safety, that it should be transferred to the arms and care of the generous Robin, who made a voluntary proposal to relieve the other from the onerous charge he had upon his hands, and to undertake the management of the whole affair himself. This being settled upon, the two cordially parted, now better acquainted and even higher exalted in each other's esteem than on the occasion of their former interview.

At half-past six on the same evening, after a day fraught with so many romantic incidents, Lorance Langton, with no lack of appetite, set himself to dinner in his quiet inn.

CHAPTER X.

A SEARCH.

EARLY on the morning succeeding the events related in our last chapter, a man and two women, one something under the middle age of life, the other more advanced in years, were observed wandering, now separately, now together, through the woods and open glades, which abound, as we have seen, within the respective valleys of the Watch and the Dye, in that locality where the two streams form a junction. The parties appeared intent upon some object of more than

ordinary interest. By his movements, the man seemed to confine his exertions chiefly by the bed and windings of the river, examining, narrowly the pools and precipices as he passed onward; while the accompanying females traversed the banks, plunged through the patches of rank fern, and penetrated the thickets, wheresoever these appeared before them. Operating in this manner, they seemed to exert themselves under a sombre and silent sense of anxiety. The sun had arisen with the promise of a bright day, but a thin cloud of fog or mist still lingered in the valleys, which at times entirely hid them from view. They had thus proceeded over a considerable tract without any change or apparent success in the attainment of their object, when the elder female, turning to her companion, broke silence :

“ Eh, whou ! ” sighed the dame, despondingly ; “ but, Jennie, I’m feared we’re but huntin’ the gouke i’ thae wuds. I’se warrant ye some o’ thae vaugrant gipsies are the deed o’ the sweet bairn.

That tinkler quean, Maull Drummon, an' her lawless gang o' thieves an' randies, hae again got camped doon i' the Backmoor—strips, an' naether fools, nor claise, nor bairns, let alone sheep an' swine, will be safe i' the countryside till they're driven oot o' the parishen."

"Nay, Salley ! dinna break my heart wi' evil forbodings," returned the troubled listener, with a sigh; "although I'm sadly to blame, I hope for a better fate for my little darling!"

"I wat ye're right, Jennie," rejoined the grave Sally. "Hope abideth much, an' faith availeth mair, an' self-reproach chasteneth the heart; an' sae, turnin' oor faith on High, we may walk on our way without fear or tremblin', sae lang as we come not on his body, breathless an' stiff among the busses, or pierced through wi' the horns o' the runnin' bull; or sae lang as Yadie disna see him wi' his wee neck broken, or dashed t' pieces ootour the rocks; or, peradventure, his bonnie white skin shinin' wi' the chucky-stanes at the bottom o' some pule i' the waiter."

"O, Sally! how can you distract my bosom with such terrible thoughts?" exclaimed Jennie, imploringly, while a tear glistened in her eye. "I'm tremblin' all through my frame wi' fears of my own, and ye see I'm wringin' wet as well yourself, abune the knees, wi' the heavy dew on the grass, an' can hardly sustain myself."

"Ne'ertheless, Jennie, my woman," again said the other, more soothingly, "take ye courage an' comfort t' yersel sae lang, as I've said, we see naething war o' the bairn. The comely infant may but sleep among the dry braken, an' the nights are no yet sae vera cauld; an', ye ken, the Scripture saith: 'the Lord tempereth the winds to the shorn lamb,' an', as for hunger, ye maun mind, Jennie, how the prophet Elijah, the Tishbite, was fed bee the ravens when he dwelt by the brook Cherith."

To this, one of "Job's comforters," Jennie made but a faint reply; and as the man, whom they named Yadie, had now made his appearance upon the top of the bank, at some distance in

advance of them, the colloquy ended, and the speakers moved forward.

The course of the Dye, so far as was deemed necessary, had been now scrupulously searched ; and that of the sister-stream, Watch, remained next to be explored. Here the parties again disposed of themselves in a similar manner to the plan pursued on the previous grounds—the man continuing by the side of the rivulet, with the women climbing the banks and traversing the adjacent thickets. After proceeding in this fashion for some time, the younger female, who throughout the whole of the morning had silently laboured under a load of oppressive anguish, entered a recess in the banks, known in the neighbourhood by the name of Bessy's Hole—a place in these woods formerly pointed out to the reader as the sylvan abode of an invulnerable witch ; this on the averment of our trusty friend John Dods. In this recess, which is densely surrounded and overhung with birch, intermingled with other trees of wild growth, there is a spring of crystal

water, which, from its purity—if purity be a recommendation for canonical preferment—might long ere now have received the honours of canonisation, and probably, had chance put it in the way, have risen to the austere favour of the renowned Friar of Copmanhurst. Adjoining this spring spreads a small open space of green ground, through the surface of which oozes forth the trickling water, creating thus, at a particular spot, a soft and impressive kind of clay.

It was, then, in this recess, on the entrance of Jennie, that the first faint trace of the missing child, of whom they were in search, was discovered. A recent print of its naked foot was now observed upon the humid soil, by its afflicted mother—for such, it had transpired, was the relationship between them. Her companions were soon summoned to the spot, and her friend Yadie at once confirmed her opinion that it was the impression of a human foot, and of a child's of the age of five or six years old.

This individual, it may be remarked, thus

engaged in bestowing his useful services upon the sorrowful mother of the child, was an inhabitant of a distant country town, and, by special appointment, none other than that awful personage so much the dread of simple villagers and wayward school-boys, namely, a rural constable, commonly termed in country vernacular, “beagle,” probably a misnomer for beadle. As it was common in those times, in small country towns and populous villages, for this functionary, whose office was held at a cheap rate, to combine with it some other stationary calling, such as shoemaker or weaver, so our present acquaintance alike plied the shuttle and wielded the baton. He was here at present, however, not in his official capacity; but happening to be in the neighbourhood upon business in connection with his weaving occupation, where he learned of the distressing occurrence of a missing child, he, actuated with the common feelings of humanity—an attribute not over-liberally assigned to the order of constables—had come promptly forward

to proffer his aid to the mother, whose husband chanced to be absent for some days at a distance on the painful occasion.

Combining shrewdness with experience, this man examined carefully the footprint and surrounding ground, and to him it clearly appeared to be of recent date; nevertheless, he thought it must have been at a time not later than the previous day. In support of this conjecture, he directed attention to the night's dew upon the adjoining grass, which, he observed, remained totally undisturbed.

Satisfied with this fact, the party then resumed their former toils; but their progress onward was again interrupted by the discovery of another indication of the child's recent "whereabouts," as the official Yadie termed it.

This was nothing less than the three small hives with wild-bees, the slender fishing-rod, and some shrivelled minnows—the same that had been observed on the preceding day by the subject of our narrative. But to these articles,

since that event, there had been added, placed by their side upon a thin stone, a few small clay balls, representing marbles.

The mother's heart yearned oppressively while she stood over these touching remembrances of her lost child.

Whatever portion of this emotional effect was partaken of by the accompanying Yadie, he kept locked within his own bosom ; and his eye seemed to dwell upon them for a different purpose.

But of the several articles, the clay balls were esteemed the most significant for the occasion.

They were still soft, he remarked, and taking into consideration their exposed position to the sun, together with the great heat of the preceding day, he came to the conclusion that they must have been manufactured upon that afternoon, when the sun was on the decline.

As before, he here examined the surrounding grass, and, what appeared to excite renewed interest, he noticed a visible track through the dewy herbage leading directly westward.

This, however, he observed to his companions, might have been made by a hare or fox, as well as by a child.

Still he resolved upon following up the track, but had not proceeded over a hundred paces, when he found it had merged with the stream, and finally disappeared.

He next crossed to the opposite side, and, continuing his search, came upon another portion of the soft ground, caused by the occasional overflow of a tributary brook.

Upon this spot, which was soft, and had been stripped of the sod, he again discerned several footmarks, corresponding in every particular with that already noticed.

But this discovery was likewise fraught with serious discouragement, for a horse had subsequently passed over the ground, and had, with its iron hoofs, obliterated portions of the human footprints; consequently, he considered them of too old an origin for benefiting the present pursuit.

He then retraced his steps, to rejoin the disap-

pointed women, who had now completed the small remaining portion of the wood he had left unexplored.

Thus far, then, had these three individuals conducted their elaborate search—with what success, the reader is already informed—when a man bearing a plaid, with a dog at his heels and staff in hand, appeared upon the top of a bank overlooking the stream where they stood.

He had been passing on his way to his distant home, and chancing to hear voices below, had walked forward to ascertain the cause.

Upon thus learning the nature of their business, he descended from the eminence, and approaching, addressed to them some questions respecting the appearance of the child.

He next drew the constable aside, and conversed with him a few seconds, then resumed his journey eastward.

The constable again returned to his companions, and after an exchange of a few words he inquired if they thought there was any place else in the neigh-

bourhood which the child was in the habit of frequenting, stating, as his reason for doing so, that as they had now passed the skirts of the wood, he was afraid it was hopeless to continue their search farther in the present direction.

The women deliberated together for a time, after which, the mother of the infant, in deep distress, replied that she knew of no other place that the child was known to frequent alone, except a farmhouse (naming it) at some distance from its home, where it had an elder brother, of about the age of nine years, at present living with the farmer's family. But at this place she did not think it could now be, as on reaching home at a late hour on the previous night (she having been from home during the day), and learning of its absence from the house, she could not rest until she had walked to the farm, dark and late as the hour was, to ascertain if it was with its brother. But neither had the elder brother, nor any other person, seen it on that day.

At the close of these remarks, the constable,

perhaps for reasons of his own, expressed, nevertheless, a desire to visit the farm.

He accordingly proposed that he should now proceed thither, and that the two women should return directly home, and despatch a messenger to Lockermaykiss, who should cause the bellman or public crier to publish there the loss of the child; but to authorise no direct inquiries to be made at the gipsy encampment until he should return to be present.

This course being adopted, the parties separated for the purpose of promptly carrying it into effect.

CHAPTER XI.

PROCEEDINGS BY THE CONSTABLE.

By the energetic movements of the constable, the farmhouse shortly appeared before him. On his way he came to a field in which he saw three men with their horses engaged at the plough.

They were in the act of turning upon the headland, and seeing a stranger enter by the gate, and walking towards them, they awaited his approach.

“Gude-day t’ye, lads,” said he, as he reached

them, “hae ony o’ ye got sic a thing aboot ye as a pinch o’ snuff? I cam away this mornin’ at sunrise an’ forgat my mull, an’ ma nose is greenin’ awfu’ for’t.””

“That I hae, man,” answered one of them, briskly—“here’s the sneeshin,” pulling out his box; “an’ ye’re walcum, freend.”

“Thank ye lad, I’ll yebbles do as muckle for you when ye’re droosy i’ the kirk some day,” returned the grateful Yadie, with a sly twinkle of his eye.

“Hoot man! dinna be afraid o’t i’ that gate; ye tak a bit pickle like a learner,” added the man with the box.

The crafty Yadie was not a snuff-taker, but had here adopted this mode of entering into conversation with the men, in order that he might thus gather any stray information, without the appearance of an express purpose.

This practice he had adopted when officially employed in ordinary cases, when evidence, from apprehension of trouble or consequences, was ex-

pected to be reluctantly given, he in all instances keeping his mind to himself.

"Why, freend," said another of the ploughmen, "ye seem t' hae been i' the waiter—ye're wat up t' the houghs."

"Ay, gudeman, ma feet's a bit wat, I tweel ; for the dew, ye ken, is gye thick on the gerse an' lang heather this mornin' ; and I cam ower the muirs afore the lavricks was up, t' see if there was onything t' be dune up-by at the Ha' i' the weavin way ; for I'm a wabster bee trade."

"Ay man, ye're a weaver t' trade, are ye ?" said another ploughman, running an eye over his figure.

"A weaver bee trade, birth, marriage, an' descent."

"Hoo d'ye mak that oot, man ?" inquired the astonished ploughman.

"I was born an suckled amang threeds an' thrums ; my faither was a weaver, ma mither was the daughter o' another ; my wife's the daughter o' a creashy loon ! an' ye see afore ye a lineal

descendant, bee the male side, o' that illustrious
wabster that wove the glorious banner that waved
ower the heed o Robert Bruce at Bannockburn,"
quoth the cannie Yadie.

"Weel, man, I'm satisfied noo; but hear ye
ony nous i' yer travels," added the other.

"The blad o' muckle's gaun i' that way,"
answered the webster. "King Geordie's got the
goot, I hear; and they say Bonoporte is comin'
ower the water, wi' fifty thoosan' men, t' see
him, an' breakfast i' Lunnan some o' thae fine
mornins."

The gaping rustics looked appalled at this in-
telligence, and were about to follow it up by some
further questions, when the clever Yadie stopped
them short.

"Na, na, friends—turn aboot's fair play," said
he. "Hae ye naething fresh wi' ye up by, aboot
yer ain toon? I'se warrant the lads an' lasses,
the bairns an' auld folks, are no aye asleep there,
ony mair than the goukes o' Grinlaw, or the
boggles o' Bessy's Hole.

"Fages, man," replied another man of the

clods, with a little rustic humour, “unless ye want t’ken hoo often the cats kittie, or Bauby Bell’s feshed t’ the toon i’ the year, or hoo often Tam, there, gangs t’ coort the Ha’ maiden, or Jock, here, sees ghosts run up the lum, or Tammie Dyate, the herd up yonder, gets his licks frae his wife, we hae naething else wurdy the wund, an’ nane o’ them is either new or fresh to us.”

“But hear ye naething new gaun amang yer neeburs roond aboot?”

“The shame a thing; an’ if it warna for an ora packman, or Willie Trick, the cadger body, tellin’ the wyves the country clavers yince a week, when they’re giein’ t’him their eggs for sape and canales, or an odd time at the preachin’, the sorra o’ nous o’ that kind we’d hear.”

“Then ye dinna often hae other visitors amang ye?”

“No often; there was yin yesterday—a English rider, as we thocht bee his tongue; for he spak t’ us as he gaed past on his road t’ the Ha’, but nane was the wiser o’ his cracks.”

“Ay, an’ ye had a English rider amang ye

yesterday, had ye!" said the sly weaver. "That's gude news t' me; for I hae tway or three linen wabs t' sell. I daresay he'll be stayin' for the day doon-by—but what was he like? an' had he onything carrying?"

"He was a wicelookin' chield enough," replied the ploughman; "but he had naething carryin' that I saw, but was carried himsel be a spunkie auld meer, that loupt the Crossburn, below there, wi' him, as ghin she had a flee on her back."

"Aweel, lads, time's rinnin' on wi' us a', an' I hae a gye bit t' gang the day, afore I can see the rider aboot the wabs; sae I maun noo wus ye a' gude-mornin', an' be steppin'."

When Yadie had reached some cottages occupied by the farm-servants, he knocked at the first door he came to. It was standing wide open at the time, and an inmate, in the figure of a respectable housewife, was soon before him.

"Gude day t' ye, mistress," said he, with a nod of his head; "will ye cbleege me wi' a glint o' fire t' light my pipe?"

"Aweel await will I, gudeman," answered the woman, with a quiet frankness; "come in ower, an' rest ye. Ye look as ye'd been travellin' i' the bogs—ye're a' wat aboot the feet, man—sit doon there, near the fire, an' dry yersel a wee," added the hospitable dame, when the two had reached the floor.

"I'm a wee bit wat, I tweel, gudewife; an I'll be naething the war o' the fire, an' a' the better for a draw o' the pipe."

Here the owner of the "linen wabs" did not require to play the counterfeit, as in the case of the snuff-taking; for he carried his pipe and blew a cloud lustily; which, by the way, it was thought, when in quest of an object, he lighted betimes more frequently than he replenished with tobacco.

"Maybe, freend," the gudewife remarked, "ye hae been lookin' for the lost bairn?"

"Hae ye heered onything o' t' up here?" said Yadie, cannily evading the answer by the substitution of another question.

"Na, naething's been heard up here," she replied; "an' I'm sorry for the bonnie wi' laddie, as weel as the puir mother. But it 'll be an awfu' thing if it's been stoun."

"Whae was t' steal it, gudewife? Surely there's been nae loose or suspicious characters seen hereaway o' late," said the constable, puffing away unconcernedly.

"Nane that I heerd tell o'; there's no been a stranger seen aboot this toon but a gentleman yesterday on horseback, for a gye wheen days past."

"What was this chield like, an' after, ken ye?"

"He gaed up t' the Ha', an' ca'd at the hoose, but the maister, who he axed for, wasna at hame, an' he went his ways again, as the kitchen-lass telled us."

"He didn't stay lang, then?" said Yadie.

"Nae langer nir knockin' at the door, an' gettin' his answer thrae the maiden, so they say."

"Hae nane o' the Yethem or Gorden gangs o' tinklers been seen aboot the place? for, ye ken, they're no ower cannie neighbours."

"Nane o' them, t' my kennin', for a lang while."

"Now, mistress," concluded the weaver, after some further trifling remarks, "I've had a gye bit rest, an' a refreshin' blaw alang wi't, sae I maun be trampin, again. Weel, gude-day t' ye, an' thank ye."

Leaving the cottage he proceeded next to the farmhouse, or Ha', as it was termed, but his inquiries here, as elsewhere, elicited nothing to throw a gleam of light upon the matter on hand, or deserving of notice here. He therefore at once retraced his steps, so far as convenience served, in order to reach the distant village spoken of without delay.

The remote village of Lockermaykiss is picturesquely situated in a wooded valley upon the banks of a considerable stream, which here flows between its shady banks with picturesque effect

over a rocky and stony bed. Within it stands an isolated inn, under the especial government of a buxom widow ; and within this inn, in an uncarpeted room, there now sits a man possessed of a muscular frame, of a profusion of dark hair upon his head and face, and of coarse thick-set features. He has a shaggy dog lying by his feet, a plaid flung over the back of his chair, and a stout hazel-stick reclining between his knees. He is a stranger from a distance, and he looks fatigued by his journey, and is refreshing himself with bread and cheese and a bottle of ale. The landlady, a ruddy queen of goodly presence, and well furnished in her details, with a head under deep obligations to her tire-woman—is standing within the open door of this room, and graciously vouchsafing a few words in promiscuous converse with her uncouth-looking guest. Without, the sombre and desolate aspect of the village has been suddenly awakened into one of stir and animation ; old dames are to be seen in stout-soled shoes tramping from house to house

as “big with the fate of Rome.” Neighbours are clustered together with neighbours with their mouths open, their tongues loosened, and their eyes sparkling as the wings of fire-flies. The common epidemic has reached the inn, and the lady-paramount is now engaged in expressing to the swarthy stranger her symptomatic condition.

Thanks to the stout lungs and bold elocution of the public crier, for administering to his fellow-citizens so wholesome a stimulant. In the mouth of this local benefactor the proclamation of the missing child obtained all the advantages of a consummate master in his craft. Indeed, and to exonerate ourselves from the imputation of exaggeration, we feel it incumbent upon us to say—and that on unimpeachable authority—that it has often been a disputed point among the learned of the village—namely, the reverend minister and collegian schoolmaster of the parish—whether even Stentor himself in his best days could have sustained his fame in a bawling contest with him.

At this juncture of things in the village, but more particularly in that portion of it which alone concerns us—the parlour of the inn—there entered a third party, who immediately seated himself upon a chair by the side of the stranger of former mention, whereupon the hostess withdrew. By the manner of the two men, their meeting here seemed to be of a preconcerted kind. Further refreshments were now called in, of which the last-comer appeared to be in some need. After the exchange of a few common observations, they entered into conversation in an undertone of voice. Their dialogue—so far as it became audible through the key-hole to the ear of the landlady—commenced and continued somewhat thus :

“ I forget now, freend,” began the last-comer, who was none other than the canny weaver and constable, whose indefatigable exertions we have lately recorded. “ I forget, now,” said he, “ what name ye said yer faither gied up t’ the

minister when ye were bapteesed"—the man had not hitherto mentioned his name.

"Ma name's Hairy Stotts," answered the stranger, with a harshness in his voice, "but it was than Henry, of coarse."

"Man, I think I hae seen ye afore, somehow—but my memory fails me as I grow aulder—are ye frae the neeghbourhood o' Glowrourem?"

"Na, man, yer wrang; an' ah think we hae neer seen yin another afore the day when I spak t' ye on the bank at the wud—naither ma memory nir my eyen ever fails me whan I hae yince seen a man."

"Forby a' that, mi man, they may hae played the slut t' ye yince i' yer time. But I'm a common-lookin' body at ony rate, an' no vera kenspeckle, ye see; an' ye hae the better o' mi there."

"What d'ye mean bee that, man?"

"Naithing mair then that ye're a bang-lookin' fallah, an' baith lasses an' lads, who yince

see ye, will be gye apt t' ken ye again. But, man, ye're no tastin'. Here's t' ye, an' t' better acquaintance ; take aff yer dram. Mrs. Tapturn has a drap gye gude stuff on hand the noo ; it grips the thrapple as it gangs doon."

" Ah like the yill best," saith Hairy Stotts.

" An' I'm no again' that mysel, sae I'll ca' in another bottle ; for I find my drooth's a bit hard t' sloken the day. But," continued the versatile Yadie, taking hold of the edge of the plaid, " that's a bit gye weel put thegither claith that maud o' yours. Whae's yer weaver at hame, for I'm i' that line ?"

" An no boond t' ony man ; whiles ah ha' yin, an' whiles another."

" Weel, I do them as cannie as onyboddy I ken o', an' a bit walk 's a rest t' me often. If ye're no a' the farrer off, an' tell me where ye stop, I may gie a ca' i' the by-gaen some day. For mysel, I was born in Shuttlebrae, an' live i' the village o' Tackletoun, an' ama webster bee trade ; an' ye see I'm no ashamed o' ony o' them, and no

abune tellin ye without axin' ; for it's a' i' the way o' trade t' be ken'd ; an' sae, owr a dram or bottle o' yill, yin needna be thought the warse o' for haein' a bit ee t' business."

"Weel, ah live at Hungrycruik, but was born at Byrefit ; an' whan ye're comin' that way gie's a ca', an' the wife 'll yebbles gie ye a bit job."

"Thank ye, freend, I'll no forget ye."

At this stage of the proceedings Henry Stotts rose, and left the room for a few seconds.

On his return there appeared to his companion a perceptible change in his manner.

It was, however, no part of Yadie's tactics, in dealing with an awkward or slippery customer, to take notice of what did not answer his purpose. He had now by his ingenuity acquired the stranger's address, to be used in case of need, and his next object was to obtain from him some private information respecting an alleged purloiner of the missing child, which he was supposed to possess.

"Now, Hairy," said he, after the other resumed his seat, taking the glass from his lips, which he used at all times but sparingly; "Now, Hairy—for I'll gie yer ain way o' the name, syne we're gettin' better acquaint—as the afternune's wearin' through, an' we baith hae, as I allege, a gude wheen lang staps t' make afore our wives can smell the drap o' drink we hae ta'en, I would just like t' hear what little help i' the way o' information ye car gie t' the puir bereaved mother aboot the bairn."

"Feigh, it's very sma help ye can get thrae me, man."

"That's vera proper an' modest, t' undervainly yin's service or bounty t' yin's neebur in time o' need," replied Yadie, approvingly. "But ye telled me, ye ken, up by on the bank, that I might hain mysel the trouble o' searchin' aither the wuds or waiters ony father, for ye didna think it wad be found there, if ever."

"Weel, man, an' ah tell ye the same nou."

"For, says you, ye had a gude bit guess what gate it had gaen."

"Weel man, if ah said sae than, although ah dinna mind o'd, ah'll no mak mysel a leear, where ah am."

"An', ye'll mind," continued Yadie, without pausing, "ye said, if I was doon this way, an' ca'd in at Mrs. Tapturn's, aboot four o'clock, when ye wad be there afore ye gaed hame, t' take a dram thegither, which I said I wad do, ye wal then tell me yer reasons for sayin' what ye did at the bank."

"Now, ghin ah did say a' that, what than?"

"I think, as an honourable man, ye canna gang back o' yer word."

"Weel, now, t' be plain wi' ye, ah dinna want t' get fash an trouble wi' other folk's business,"— so said Hairy Stotts.

"Hoot, man," replied the other jocosely, "ye wadna be afraid o' that i' the case o' duty an' humanity. An', ye mind ye telled me, besides, something about yin o' the gipsies, or some yin

maybe caneevin' wi' them, or belangin' t' them, which ye saw ridin' eastward i' their direction, wi' a little bairn on the horse afore him.”

“ Ah didna speak positive. It might only be a bundle, an' belang to hissel'.”

“ Would ye ken the man again, if ye saw him ?”

“ A canna say nou whether I wad or no.”

“ Hoot man, ye telled me a while ago that ye never saw a man yince that ye couldna tell again. Will ye walk oot wi' me as far as the gipsy 'campment, an' try ?”

“ Ah hae nae time for that kind o' wark ; forby thae gipsies are a revengefu' set, and ken everybody.”

Finding himself thus hard pressed, and overmatched by the clever weaver, Henry Stotts, upon finishing the last sentence, rose quickly from his chair, seized his plaid and staff, and strode out of the room.

“ Weel, freend,” said the disappointed Yadie to himself, casting a look of something like keen

scorn on the other's back as he left, "ye're a gye sturdy rough-moothed-lookin' tike, but an arrant courd, I'se bail for't; an' wha sees, or I'm wrangin' ye, as many boggles as busses an' waiter-pules o' a dark night. Ye hae changed yer tune a bit syne we first met; but," he continued, soliloquising, "if the bairn disna cast up afore tway or three days gang by—let me see; this is Tyesday, an' the coort sits on Friday; yes, three days—I'll see if I canna gar ye tune yer whistle owr again."

Truly enough, the refractory Stotts had changed his tune since he had first entered the inn, having during his momentary absence been informed of the twofold occupation of his companion within. His gross and inhuman reticence was therefore to be accounted for from a knowledge thus acquired that his new acquaintance, the weaver of Shuttlebrae, was in verity a constable as well as a weaver; and consequently a fear had arisen that anything he should let drop from his lips might, in such hands, bring him into personal danger

from the gipsies, or “ trouble and fash” from other quarters.

When his swarthy companion had left, Yadie Webster, upon settling his reckoning, had some conversation with the landlady (who knew him by sight), in the course of which she informed him that a woman named Dods, living at a short distance from the village, had met, on the preceding afternoon, near a stell in the moors, a man on horseback holding a child on the saddle before him ; and that the woman was sure it was the missing bairn, for she recognised its features, she being in the habit of visiting its family. The hostess further informed him that the person who had just left could have told him as much, if he had chosen to do so ; and she continued to state that there was a man residing in the village of the name of Prentice, whom the stranger, Stotts, had met with on his way to the inn, and to whom he had said that, also on the previous day, about four o’clock in the afternoon, and near to the same stell, a horseman rode past

him with a small child on the saddle before him, but the rider did not see him, for he was resting himself at the time on the ground among some long ferns ; and that he could swear to the identity of the horseman among thousands, for he had seen and spoken to him once before,

Upon this information the eyes of the listener emitted something like a flash from the ignition of a lucifer-match, combined with a sly twinkle, which was again closely followed by a triumphant wag of the head, and a low utterance of voice, such as could be only audible only to a stone or brick wall, with the keen ear outside against it of a clever reporter, in which the name of “ Hairy Stotts ” was respectfully mentioned.

“ Now, Mrs. Taptur,” said the newly-inspired weaver, returning hurriedly into the parlour, “ will ye just send me in another dram o’ yer best, an’ be sae gude as t’ let the maiden slip oot an’ get a bit laddie t’ show me up the hill t’ this woman Dods’s hoose. Tell the callant I’ll gie him a saxpence ; an’ alang wi’ that, Mrs.

Tapturñ," he added, "ye'll maybe obleege me a wee bit mair, bee no lettin it inkle out t' onybody till I come back, that ye said onything t' me anent what passed atween Tam Prentice an' the toosy-lookin' fellah who's just left us t' get hame afore the bogles leave the kirkyards."

These instructions being readily complied with, the enterprising Yadie, in company with a boy, was soon seen upon the road, plying his nimble feet, while, carried away perhaps by the glee of the moment, he was more than once detected in the inordinate indulgence of a low whistle.

To have applied to him at this moment his local *sobriquet* "beagle," could not, in a figurative sense, with justice, have been set down against the villagers as a great transgression or barbarity in nomenclature. Like that little musical animal upon a good scent, he was giving tongue after his own fashion.

Pressing on in this manner, with "head up," he speedily disappeared within the cover of a comfortable thatched cottage.

He found Mrs. Dods a respectable and sensible woman, with whom he succeeded in his mission to his entire satisfaction ; she confirming almost word for word what he had learnt at the inn ; and, to abbreviate the account of his further proceedings and conclude his toils for the day, it remains with us only to state that he was equally successful in his inquiries with Thomas Prentice.

CHAPTER XII.

PREPARATIONS FOR A TRIAL.

WITHIN the remote and outlying districts of the country which furnishes the present scene of our story, the manners and customs of the inhabitants retained, at the period in question, much of a simple and primitive character.

The population was thin and widely scattered, commonly frugal in their habits, and little addicted to grave infractions of the law. The shooting or snaring of a hare, and the spearing of a salmon, were the common infringements imputed

to them, and these acts in their eyes, among the hills, were often erroneously regarded in the light of traditional privileges, rather than violations of right.

But little public provision was therefore required in these localities for the administration or enforcement of justice against an offending native.

The village of Lockermaykiss had its church and its school-house, but it possessed no special building, in the name of a court-room; and owing to its great distance from any establishment of this kind, much unavoidable inconvenience was imposed upon the community, when offences did occur, especially in cases wherein witnesses were required to be drawn hence to the nearest public court.

But, in a measure to lessen these hardships, it had been so arranged, under the sanction of the higher authorities, that one, two, or three, as the case might be, of the nearest resident magistrates should hold here a sort of supple-

mental court, at least once on every month, but oftener, if public duty required, for the hearing and disposing of minor causes, after the ordinary manner of petty sessions.

For this end the use of a large barn was obtained, boarded at the one end, upon which the "judicial benches" were placed, while the remaining portion of the floor was covered over with a coat of hard clay.

The building was the property of a private citizen, and was alternately employed for the administration of the law, for the teaching of dancing, the fighting of cocks, the performance of strolling players, and hearing of itinerant preachers — roving lecturers were not then in fashion.

In the front and round the door of this accommodating erection, about the hour of twelve at noon upon the third day from that with which commenced the vigilant search for the missing child, there appeared a scattered assemblage of boys and girls, and of men and women of various

ages and conditions. The children were occupying themselves with frolicsome sports, while their seniors were engaged with the discussion of graver matters. The door had not yet been opened for their admission into the building, for on this important day that door was to open for an event of interest to Scottish matrons, such as had never before or since found a parallel in the annals of the parish. The *Court*, the awful court, big (in their belief) with the fate of mortals, *was to sit*, and the fell perpetrator of a crime for which mothers wail, sisters weep, and fathers mourn, was there and then to be dragged into public view—an unholy and guilty trafficker in human babies was about to be revealed to them—tried without mercy, hung, and quartered before the setting of the sun ; and from that hour all gipsies, and confederates of gipsies, should henceforth be stoned in the streets. To this extreme had their imaginations carried them, when the ears of the concourse were saluted by the reluctant sound of a rusty lock, followed by

the grating of equally reluctant and rusty hinges, whereupon in rushed the crowd. The doors of Her Majesty's Opera, with the expected voice of Jenny Lind within, could not have inspired a more eager or impatient entry.

The curtain for their expected tragedy, however, was not yet to be drawn, and some loiterers about the door were still keeping a steady look out for an early glimpse of the company of performers. The trial to their patience was not long, for presently two horsemen are seen to approach, followed by a third, and a gig containing two persons. They all alight and enter the room. These are again shortly followed by the arrival of sundry others, some on horseback, and some in similar light carriages. After the lapse of a few minutes more, another comer appears ; he is upon a stout white pony, and accompanied by a man, a woman, and child, in a gig, upon whom he is bestowing considerable attention. Instead, however, of immediately stopping by the door of the court, this party turns away to a dif-

ferent part of the village. Lastly, from an opposite route, waited upon by a mounted attendant, there comes into view another horseman ; he is carried by a bay mare with a conspicuously white spot on her forehead.

“The judges hae ta’en their sates,” said a villager to his companion, which was the signal for a speedy entry for outside stragglers. During that expectant pause, so familiar to the frequenters of public tribunals, between the settling down of the august functionaries and the commencement of proceedings, a cursory glance through the interior of the building may not appear amiss. Now, in doing so, and making a proportionate allowance for its architectural shortcomings, as a place appointed for its present purpose, there appears about it something partaking vastly of the comical. A stranger taking his stand among the spectators, ignorant of what is about to take place, might feel greatly puzzled to guess at, or divine the object of the assembly. There is the absence of that refined

atmosphere of mild solemnity or imposing effect which greets his entrance in a high court of law. True, there is here a stillness, and something like an air of constrained and awkward decorum, mingled with staring curiosity and suppressed voices ; but standing in the crowd and overlooking the shoulders before him, his mind would speculate variously as to the nature of the forthcoming entertainment. Whether, in fact, it was to turn out a devotional or temperance meeting, a feat of jugglery, a pass of fists, a round at quarter-staff, or a Scotch reel, over which, upon elevated seats, overlooking a small open arena in the floor, an umpire with two aides-de-camp were to preside, adjudge the skill, and award the prizes. But alas ! how vain are man's attempts to fathom mysteries ! and how hard it is to judge of the designs of men from outward appearances !

At the extreme end of the barn, exalted upon a bench, there now sit three men, one of whom carries in his person something of an aristocratic

mien ; the others possess the air of gentlemen farmers. These, then, are the august personages in whose hands (according to the profound interpretation of many of their imaginative bystanders) are lodged those scales of Fate, which are to be this day nicely poised up before their straining eyes, and to tremble over a stake of life or death to the weight of a feather. Upon the floor, at a short distance from and fronting these, are arranged four other benches, or portable forms, two of which being placed transversely and at right angles with the other two, thereby form a square representing a bar. In the centre of this area stands a table of considerable size, around which are now seated several respectable looking gentlemen, but amongst these are to be observed two individuals of especial mark ; they have papers placed before them, and appear to be men of unembarrassed manners and undaunted looks. In aspect the face and forehead of the one possess a decided advantage over those of the other, in point of general expression, promptness

of thought, and mental range. These, again, are two auxiliary instruments which are this day appointed to pile up the feathers upon the opposing scales of Destiny. Parallel with the walls of the room, and situated opposite to the square, are placed two other forms, one on either side of the house, and upon one of them again sit five grave looking persons. These, then, represent the several birds from which are to be plucked the feathers to be cast into one of the scales. Their names are respectively Henry, otherwise Hairy, Stotts—in the act of hanging his ponderous head and large ears sadly downwards; Thomas Prentice, William Moscript, Andrew Pennie, and Alison Dods; and, as an appendix to the roll, on the same seat, and close by the side of the last mentioned individual, and vastly more at his ease than either, rests Adam, otherwise Yadie, Webster. Upon the opposite form, all, alas! is vacancy.

A stillness now pervades the room, and all eyes are turned upon the benches. The presid-

ing magistrate takes into his hand a scrap, or leaf of written paper—reads, then utters a name—the name is again repeated aloud to the crowd by an underling of office. No response is made—a dead pause ensues. This continuing for some time, the magistrate inquires if there be any persons standing by the outside of the door. There had been a stranger, he was answered, who had just hurriedly left, but was now returning in company with another individual; but on their way, the latter was momentarily stopped by the receipt of a note from a third party, who had been waiting unobserved for this opportunity to present it. The receiver of this note did not take time to open it, putting it into his pocket.

“There he goes,” said an elderly dame, whose voice did not sound altogether strange in his ears, “like a bull o’ Baushun, led up to the slaughter, an’ Hall o’ Justice.”

The speaker did not then see the person’s face, or probably she would have recognised some features thereon.

An opening was quickly made through the crowd for the passage of the “prisoner.” He entered upon a light tread, with perfect composure, and was conducted to what, for form’s sake, we shall here term a dock or witness-box, but what might otherwise have been mistaken for a pen, with a movable hurdle in front, and was provided, apart from the crowd, for the accommodation of plaintiffs and defendants, requiring separate room. Upon his entry the “sensation of the court” was indescribable, more especially that portion of it composed of the rural and curious spectators, to the majority of whom even the interior of a court of law was a sight of marvel; but the novelty of the scene before them, with their exaggerated notions of its awful power, and of their certainty of a criminal trial, the conviction of the felon, and forthwith execution of him, lent to it an effect to which no pen could do justice. This was intensified the more by their belief, the moment their eyes alighted upon his person, that instead of seeing a wretched and

desperate looking ruffian dragged up before them, in tattered garments and woebegone face, in the rank of a common trumper, or “lieutenant” of the gang, they had in the well clothed and steadfast figure presented to them, no other than the formidable king of the gipsies himself, adopting the high sounding and suspicious name of Lorance Langton, for such was the name to which he answered in the court—and, indeed, he now looked a king among themselves. To his cool, easy, and imperturbed appearance they imputed insensibility to shame and gipsy hardihood; but if there was a single person amidst the multitude of staring faces that greeted his entrance more distinguishable than other for his grim glare of secret triumph, his name was Henry Stotts—“Ah kenn’d it wad come t’ this afore lang. I’se warrant he’ll say he faund it on the road, like the horse.”

This he muttered into the ear of a person by his side, but his voice and words were not sufficiently low to escape the sharp hearing of a

professional looking gentleman in the bar before him, who immediately looked round, then turning to the table, made a note of them.

Lorance Langton, as intimated in an earlier part of this narrative, possessed, with many of his brethren, a sort of vagabond love for the excitement of adventurous incident upon his travels; but the interest and novelty of his present position, as he now stands, “the observed of all observers,” might, by most of his kindred spirits, be deemed something more than sufficient to gratify any ordinary passion. It were unnecessary here to endeavour to reveal the circumstances under which he received, in his temporary sojourn at his remote inn, from the hands of a stranger, his “modest invitation” to favour the court with the honour of his company upon that day at noon. King’s messengers and Cupids are alike mysterious in their ways and means of tracing the footsteps and discovering the names and abodes of those that interest them; and it is seldom profitable to speculate upon their ingenuity. When

he first discovered the prospect of the “early intimacy,” as he humourously termed it, that was about to spring up between him and the representatives of his Sovereign in these wild parts he felt alike flattered and amused. Had his feelings been otherwise, he would probably have used the means at his command of at once removing so gross an imputation from his character, together with all the trouble to him thereby to ensue. But, with a singularity of whim or fancy, as Nemesis might ordain, he chose an opposite course, and waywardly resolved to indulge the humours of his fickle mistress, Lady Fortune, by reserving the use of the disenchanting rod until time or necessity should require its production.

During his sojourn in India he had acquired some distinction as an amateur-performer in dramatic art, and he saw here (as we suspect) a new prospect opened to him for the exercise of his talents upon fresh boards. Further, by a glance at the “handbill,” he also saw the part the “manager” had proposed him to take in the pro-

jected performance ; and no doubt being wishful, in any of his engagements north of the Tweed, to realise in his person the expectations of his friends and patrons in the south, especially in the novel and “unprecedented attractions” (as the red and black capitals in the Strand would say), which the present opportunity presented to him ; he accordingly concluded upon undertaking the piece, and sustaining the chief character therein as best he might. Thus, or in some such manner, had the audacious “prisoner at the bar” received and reasoned over his summons to a public court of law.

The court, on the other hand, or, more properly speaking, the magistrate who granted the summons on the application, accompanied by a statement of the grounds of suspicion alleged against the accused, entertained at the time some doubts in his own mind that a man of the apparent respectability described to him, could have been guilty of the theft of an infant—otherwise a warrant for his immediate apprehension was necessary.

He therefore despatched a person privately to the inn—The Creels—at which he was reported to be stopping, to there make some inquiries respecting his habits and deportment. Through this private source he learned that he was a perfect stranger at the inn, but that his general bearing and conduct since his arrival there had been such as seemed entirely to discredit the strange allegations made against him. Impressed in this manner, this gentleman—who was the leading magistrate of the district—proceeded to the court, and took his seat upon the bench upon this eventful day—eventful in the chronicles of the parish.

When the “offender” had entered the small compartment within the railing, as noticed, where a seat was in reserve for him by the side of a woman in apparent distress, he presented the easy and erect figure of a gentleman of the world. His dress was in keeping with the city fashion of the time, but about it there was nothing of the extreme or exaggerated cast which distinguishes the snob or swell from the rest of

mankind. There was a uniformity in its details, or harmony in the *tout ensemble*, which denoted an ease or indifference in the choice of material, yet selected with perfect good taste ; and he wore it with that airy freedom and unconstrained application to purpose which is apart from sloth or affected neglect. His manners and looks were easy, mild, self-possessed, yet respectful and dignified. And if in this respect he failed to realise the expectations of his spectators in stern brows, overawing wroth, and haughty demeanour, as becoming in their estimation the character of a captive sovereign of the community of gipsies, he obviously mollified their prejudices by his conciliating deportment ; and many of the curious eyes, as he first fell under the general gaze (not excepting even some of those on the several benches), upon meeting his, were speedily turned away, somewhat self-chidden and abashed. Upon turning his face towards the magistrates he made slight inclination of his head, but this evinced more of respectfulness than humility ; and the

bow was responded to with that curtness or imitation of measure which the custom or rules of high office commonly awards to that of a questionable character.

These explanatory remarks have been thought desirable preparatory to the “trial” of our hero, in order to lessen in a degree some apparent inconsistency here in our narrative ; and it next devolves upon us to furnish a correct account of that remarkable event. For this end we will presently lay before the reader a transcript of the proceedings, as taken down in short-hand, with which we have been favoured. But ere we do so we have a few explanatory observations to submit. Upon our application for the favour, it was forwarded to us, accompanied by a confidential letter from a friend ; but as the worthy gentleman has since been gathered to his fathers, leaving nothing behind him but a respectable memory, some odd pieces of furniture, a fragmentary library, his hard-worn writing-materials, and a few stray sheets of MS., which, upon his demise, were bequeathed to

the parish, to be dedicated to the public good—we feel here (especially having an eye to the spirit of his bequest) that we are perpetrating no serious breach of trust—but, on the contrary, carrying out the express intentions of the will—by the application of this epistolary relic to the interest of our deserving reader. For its length we crave indulgence. It proceeds as follows.—

“HONOURED SIR,—Concurrently with your request for a report of the judicial investigation or ‘trial’ referred to, I herewith transmit for your use a printed copy, for the correctness of which I can freely avouch. In confidence, however, and for ‘consciences’ sake,’ I must apprise you that whatever be its merits as a local specimen in limnary craft (whereby I mean the art of transmitting to paper intelligibly the sounds and gestures of rapid speakers with dexterity and fidelity—yea, with even more than fidelity when required), these merits are due to a party which rumour has uncredited with them.

“As you are probably but indifferently informed of the exact position which I hold in the *belles-lettres* of the day, to which you complimentarily allude in your note to me, it is but fit that I should at once apprise you that it is that laborious department which relates expressly to the public press. And, though at the risk of shocking you with my confession, I may further tell you that, in pursuing my avocation of thankless drudgery to the public, I follow the wise old Scotch maxim of ‘a penny saved is a penny gained,’ by applying the same principle to human toil; and here, forgive me if I add, that should you ever be reduced to a similar condition (which God forbid) I could, *inter nos*, put you up to a wrinkle that might be profitable; and it is one that is not unfrequently to be found upon young faces as well as on their elders, amongst our profession. I will explain it *par exemple* presently. Meanwhile I must further expound to you that my present interests and services are in immediate connection with a weekly journal of the

honourable Tory principle of politics, of old and established repute, which throughout the changes of men, of faces, and of things, has staunchly stood by its colours, revolving, like its prototype, unopposed and alone upon its axis, and diffusing its temperate light within the confines of its orbit—this portion of the county—under the appropriate title of *The Northern Star*, and bearing upon its title-page the significant motto of *semper idem*. But evil days have fallen among us ; and it requires no profound seer to foretell the consequences. Since the chuckling Whigs have got into power and place in St. Stephen's, there has sprung up (I may say in our midst, though in a distinct town) an opposition journal under their especial patronage, which—pardon the expression, if differing in opinion—combines in its matter that drossy amalgamation of sentiment found in copious deposit at the bottom of these heterogeneous chaldrons which now bubble and seethe in our populous cities, in the name of the public and joint-stock firm of Whig and Liberal

—the logical principles of either ‘noble lord,’ are, to my humble share of common-sense, as difficult to comprehend as the characters on a sibylline leaf. With matchless presumption, this upstart journal is threatening to revolutionise and unsettle the minds of our people — disseminating its humid and phosphorescent sheets, like marsh-meteors, athwart the spongy bogs and heathery hills, even to the remotest corners of the Lummermoors. And, what follows? All to be manufactured into kites for boys, and curl-papers for rustic lasses, at half the cost of a respectable newspaper! Still—and will wonders never cease with us?—the respective parties who issue hebdomadally their flaminivorous outpourings, have ransacked their box of Latin scraps, and, with singular felicity, laid their inky fingers upon a motto as appropriately applied to their journal as were horns to the rump of an ox—viz., *spes gregis*, which, as I allege, has, by one of their devils, been contorted and stereotyped into, in vulgar tongue, ‘The

hope of the *people!*' Nor stops our wonder even here. The firmament of heaven has been explored for a name to match with this new and intellectual luminary, and nothing there could be found to symbolise its provincial glory save a flaming comet—hence we have, in plethoric capitals, crowning the title-page, *The Northern Comet*. I marvel the Whiggish taste had no leaning towards the configuration of the merry-dancers, otherwise the aurora borealis, the instability of whose lights and shades would have been in closer conformity with its principles—which, by the way, the merry-footed brethren of the same faith, during the intervals of the *reel* and *set* time of their *country-dance*, can contemplate with such symbolical beatitude from the rocky heights of Auld Reekie, your personal abode, as also their kindred squads, though less advantageously, through the frowsy atmosphere of a western city, famous in story for its 'Saut-market' and brose-meal. But I digress.

“Our petty courts in remote districts not un-

frequently indulge in eccentricities, but which, in their way, are nevertheless betimes fraught, as intended, with advantage to the community at large, by the economy of labour and expense. I refer here to instances wherein the graver charges are carried before the magisterial benches for investigation, which, in adducing and taxing the evidence *pro* and *con*, occasionally lapse into the form of a criminal trial, and settled upon the spot. This, however, it must be observed, is done in cases only where, in the course of the examination of witnesses, the evidence appears of insufficient weight against the accused to justify the transmission of the matter to a higher tribunal. Such was, then, the nature and jurisdiction of the court in which the ‘trial’ took place, forming the subject of your solicitation.

“ Learning of the singular case, rendered still more remarkable from exaggerated rumours, I went thither to be present at the investigation. The room in which the court was held was crowded to excess; and, like a man of business, I sought for

a place near the focus of interest. Here I found myself in immediate proximity with a reporter (said to be a perfect master in his profession) belonging to my rival orb, *The Northern Comet*. Now here comes the *wrinkle*. I was placed in a somewhat more elevated situation, and a little towards the rear of my contemporary ; and being, let me add, like many other of the lords of the quill, a better copyist than originator, evil thoughts (and with shame I do now confess it) overshadowed me. Now, thought I, here is an opportunity for putting my maxim into practice, as my eye stole over the shoulder of the gentleman, who was indeed an adept in the art of caligraphy. Could I but take a copy of his work I should gain two special points by it. Firstly, it would save me a host of trouble in arranging and rendering intelligible the sentences of the speakers. Secondly, the admirable report, by this means, would lend its lustre to the columns of the *Star* ; and, moreover, as my paper is published and in the hands of its subscribers four-

and-twenty hours earlier than its Whig rival, the *Comet*, upon the issue of the latter journal the public would at once find in it an exact copy, word for word, of what had appeared on the previous day in my columns, and thereby lay the sin and shame of the theft at the wrong door. A capital joke, this, said I to myself; ‘and a good thing to tell to your Tory patrons,’ whispered my invisible tempter. Thus shall I for once shorten the tail of the *Comet*. Accordingly I addressed myself to my task, and such were the talents of my friend, and the rapidity with which his thin fingers scampered over his tablets, that I often found myself lagging considerably behind his pen, whilst he was as frequently seen in *advance* of the *speakers* themselves. Now, you will smile at this, especially as the confession of one whose political faith belongs to that class of men proverbial for their honesty, together with an avowed scorn for anything mean, or that has been soiled by the fingers of a Whig. But let one of experience assure you, in secret,

that 'tis not the first instance of a modern Tory taking a leaf out of an opponent's book. I have the honour to subscribe, sir, your humble servant,

"R. TORITOP."

CHAPTER XIII.

COURT OF LOCKERMAYKISS.

(From the *Northern Star*.)

BEFORE the local Magistrates. — The Hon. Captain Eyecastle of Eyecastle presided— Thomas Bancroft, Esq., J.P., and Alexander Mackwurzle, Esq., J.P., were in attendance.

COCKBURN *v.* LANGTON.

This was a case charging Langton with the abduction, stealing, or kidnapping of a child (boy) aged five years, belonging to Janet Cockburn.

H. Broadbite, writer, acted for the plaintiff.

P. W. Goodhead, advocate, was present to watch the proceedings on the other side.

The case came on at half-past twelve, noon, and lasted till four P.M.

Upon the names of the parties being called there occurred a considerable pause in the court before Langton put in an appearance.

When he entered, amidst the general gaze, and had taken his place (standing) in a small compartment railed off, he appeared cool, self-possessed, respectable rather than otherwise ; but whether this was genuine or put on to meet the occasion, it were impossible in anyone but himself to determine.

When the charge had been read over to him, he was asked what he had to say in return, to which he replied, in rather a mild tone of voice, that at the present stage of the proceedings he had nothing to do but to pronounce his innocence.

This question was again followed by another from the bench, inquiring, as he appeared a

stranger, if he had engaged any professional gentleman on his behalf to be present at the investigation?

To this he answered in the negative, which to many persons present created some surprise, as there was then seated in the bar in front of him a professional gentleman of considerable local eminence.

But this is to be explained by the fact that the gentleman had, as was afterwards understood, been sent thither by some kindly-disposed party to watch the case, of which he (the accused) had had no intimation.

The ordinary preliminaries having now been gone through, Counsellor Broadbite—for such was the common appellation of this gentleman—rose up, and, bowing to the bench, said, and not without signs of emotion:

“ Gentlemen, in my professional capacity I have been called here to-day to appear before you under circumstances of an extraordinary kind—circumstances so extraordinary that, with such,

throughout the whole course of my early and my professional life, my memory recalls to me no parallel; and they are such, gentlemen, such as of which I can now say in this assembly, and I say it with a sense of inexpressible pleasure and pride—a pride and pleasure in which I feel assured you will all partake with me—that, up to within the last three days of our common lives, have never been known or heard of before in this simple, peaceful, and happy part of the world; and they are such as impose upon me a weighty responsibility—a responsibility under which I labour, alike for the interests of my suffering client and the public safety of that community of endeared little ones, disporting in gleeful innocence around our homes and our firesides. I would now crave your patient indulgence for a brief period, while I endeavour to explain to you the nature of this responsibility, and the extraordinary circumstances from which it proceeds. Gentlemen, a child has disappeared from our midst—a child whose tender life had travelled

but a little way beyond that entwining period of its papage (sensation)—a child whose short-lived days are symbolised in the infant plant, nurtured in gentle sunbeams, whose slender stem is yet unable to bear the weight of its own flower—a child, the darling care, the hope and promise of its fond parents. And how has the child disappeared? Have the maternal affections been wrenched assunder by a sudden and fatal accident? Has the interposing hand of Providence prematurely pruned away the early bud from the parental tree? Have its little limbs been folded up in its last sheets, and borne, with Christian resignation, amid weeping and sorrow, to its cold and simple rest in the grave? No, haplessly no: severe as had then been felt the knife of the pruner—severe as had now been felt the pangs of that final parting, there was yet one drop of honey mingled in the bitter cup. Though borne away under the gloomy pall, it then left behind it a track through which, step by step, the bereaved parent could have traced it thence to its

earthly lodgment, and over the green sod there shed the tear and scattered the flowers. But small—and small it were indeed—as this consoling drop must have been felt amidst its overflowing bitters, yet measured by her present allotted condition; her sum of unappeasable anguish; her tireless, sleepless days and nights as she turns and quakes upon her ocean of trouble—now snatching at an illusory gleam of hope, now shrinking from an apparition of terror—this small mite of comfort from the grave, I say, placed in comparison with the bitter and gnawing thoughts of uncertainty now on her mind, were as a joy almost equal to the resurrection of the dead infant—the restoration of its innocent face to the fond bosom of its mother.”

A shriek at this moment resounded through the silent court. It proceeded from the mother of the child; she had fainted away, and was carried to the door. Langton, the alleged offender, curious as it happened, who was standing near to the woman, and who had listened throughout

with marked attention to the speaker, was the first person to render her assistance. The cause of the incident was at first supposed to have been the result upon her mind of the last sentence of the speech. But this was found to be erroneous; for after recovering from her faintness, she declared that at the moment she saw an apparition of her child. She had distinctly seen the head and face raised above the shoulders of the crowd, at the extreme end of the court. It remained for a second, then again vanished from her sight. Such was her statement. When the interruption had ceased, the eloquent speaker resumed his oration in the same strain.

“ No, gentlemen, in her joyless condition before you, the afflicted mother, whom you have just seen sink under my simple statement of her position, has not even the consolation—the niggard consolation yielded to her from the surly grave—of knowing that the infant sufferings of her child in this world are at an end. No, bereft even of this comfort, when last night she stretched

herself down upon her own restless bed, she knew not where its little head lay at that dark and lonesome hour. Involved, then, in all these perplexing and heartrending circumstances, this child has disappeared, and by what means, and through what instrumentality has this come to pass? Now, gentlemen, I hope this day to be able to shew, nay, to prove to your perfect satisfaction, or to the satisfaction, if needs be, of any jury of intelligent men, not only by what means, but by *whom* (with emphasis) the unholy means have been employed (great sensation). That the body of the infant has been taken possession of, and unlawfully carried away—God alone knows for what purpose—from its common playground and from its home, amounts to a moral certainty, and contains the premises which, by this investigation, I mean to establish. Next, by whom has this breach of the sacred laws of humanity, of the laws of God, and of the sovereign laws of the land, been perpetrated? Whence hath come the despoiler amongst us? We have read of

days and of troublous times, when ruthless marauders, overrunning the Borders, regarded life and property in these lands as their common commodity. Are these days coming back upon us? Is the foraging mosstrooper, exchanging his glittering morion for the beaver hat, again to traverse our hills and our dales as of old?" [Here a smile faintly mantled over the face of the accused.] "I fear it is so, gentlemen. And if we have not these knightly gentlemen, clad in their antique mail, straying in our plains and lurking in our common woods, we may have their lawless representatives, tricked out in civilian fashion to suit the age we live in. Of this predatory race our modern history, our law records and civic tribunals, affords us ample evidence; and they are now represented to us under a multitude of forms and devices. I will briefly here take leave to reduce the whole fraternity to one specific head, namely, *Thieves*—for what else, after all, are our robbers, kidnappers, and swindlers, but so many thieves? These I divide into

four distinct classes. First, there are thieves from absolute necessity and *want*—the most veniable of offenders. Secondly, there are *incidental thieves*, whereby I mean such as are unable to resist temptation when an opportunity *unsought* for presents itself. Thirdly, there are thieves by *profession* and *choice*. Fourthly, there are *amateur thieves*; the latter, I rejoice to say, are of the smallest number; but I blush to say they are to be met with in the highest of our aristocratic circles; nevertheless, by nature they partake in a refined or more or less modified form, a morbid taint of the same leaven, a drop of the ichor of the meanest thief or thimblerigger found in the slums of our cities. They live in stately mansions, they frequent gorgeous saloons, they drive forth in burnished carriages, and ride on high-topped horses. If *ladies* they chance to be, they appear in splendid robes of the latest Parisian fashion; if *gentlemen* they chance to be, their glossy vestments must, forsooth, have been shorn into shape by the shears of an Edinburgh Buckmaster or a

London Stultz. Now, what, I would ask in the name of the people—what are all these in the category of their race but *splendid thieves*?—perhaps the more extensive in guilt, perhaps the more obnoxious to the rest of mankind because of their enamouring manners, the gloss upon their coats, and the richness of their attire. They are in society as the fascinating snakes we read of in distant lands, which captivate and entrap their victims by the beauty of their spots and the glitter of their manifold hues. But there is another bane to the community lurking beneath these roseate colours and silken surfaces. They bear their sting—they perfect their ends under a spacious show of honour and plausibility, and thereby throw us off our guard by eluding suspicion. Deeds of evil are done in our midst, and we blush to suspect such fine-toned instruments. It were death to them to be thought evil of. They are the last to be suspected amongst us. Our common goods, our *horses*, and our *children* may be stolen from us, but from such goodly pre-

sences we must turn our eyes away in quest of a meaner thief—some vagabond in rags. Suspicion, like a swallow, takes to flight, and traverses the air in countless directions, but when grown weary of wing, she must not alight on such dainty shoulders. No, no. But, opposed to such popular fallacy, I have to remind its advocates that stolen property has often been detected under silken mantles and braided skirts, while the shoeless mendicant stood blushing by ; and, furthermore, that it is a notorious fact, attested by our calendars of crime, that offences of the greatest magnitude against public and common morality, have been committed by persons the least liable to suspicion, and the least likely to commit them.

“Now, gentlemen, by the course or drift of these remarks, favoured by the patient and indulgent hearing with which I have been permitted to express them, I have arrived at that point in this remarkable case upon which I wish to invoke your grave and especial attention.

Amongst the other rumours and speculations to which it has given rise, it has been said, and that within my hearing, and will probably be said again by some learned gentleman, that my afflicted client, by the course now adopted on her behalf, must assuredly be upon the wrong scent for the discovery of the offender, since the party now accused with the offence is an utter stranger in this part of the country, and likewise possesses the manners and bearing of a person belonging to a class of society which precludes, if not the possibility, the probability of his committing such a wicked and objectless act. These suppositions, taken into account with the apparent absence of any conceivable motive, seem, it is argued, to render the present charge altogether absurd. Now, in the general observations which I have previously submitted, I think I have sufficiently anticipated and exposed the fallacy of such gratuitous speculations in this matter. I will therefore offer no further comment upon the first point. And with respect to the allegation, that

the accused is a stranger in these parts, I have only to remark, with due deference to other opinions, that while such a fact cannot militate against him in a proper court of justice, it avails this much in his favour, that none of his antecedents, whatever they may have been, can be brought to bear against him. And as to the assumed absence of motive for the commission of the crime, I have simply to say in reply, that as no man can divine the inward thoughts, or fathom the designs of another from outward appearances, we are left to judge of them only by a combination of circumstances ; and to read the intent of the mind, be it bad or good, in the collective evidence of a succession of concurring events culminating in a certain act. In this respect in the present instance I happen to be better provided with a medium of interpretation than can have fallen to the lot of these gratuitous speakers. Moreover, gentlemen, I feel bere warranted in assuring you that I am not addressing you this day on the mere hypothesis of cir-

cumstantial evidence. I am prepared to adduce a consecutive chain of events, pointing to and terminating in an act of positive guilt—manifesting a deliberate plan to circumvent the child by watching, waylaying, and decoying away the infant from its playground—and all this by the prisoner before you—”

The voice of the chairman here interrupted the learned speaker.

“Mr. Broadbite,” said he, “I must object to the use you have here made of the epithet *prisoner*. The gentleman is now before us upon a common summons, not a warrant, subject to this investigation, and is not a prisoner *in fact*.”

“Sir, I have to beg your pardon,” replied the learned counsellor, evincing a little temper at the remark, “and I bow submissively to your correction of my etiquette at *this bar* (with emphasis). At any rate, I was speaking *prospectively*, probably deeming from the gravity of the charge, and the facts in my possession, that some

omission of duty to the public had been somehow permitted. But, in all humility, I say with Tully, *ab amicis honesta petamus.*"

"Mr. Broadbite," retorted the magistrate, with firmness, "You have this day occupied the time of the court with an oration, which, however eloquent in itself, was upon this occasion totally out of place; and in the name of the bench, I may say, was listened to only by an effort of patience. I may here further remark, that it is sincerely hoped when eloquent gentlemen appear in this court, they will consider its jurisdiction, and the latitude usually conceded in such places; and that they will remember we meet for the discussion of practical business, and not for oratorical displays. Nor—and you will forgive me when I add—do I think your citation from Cicero, whom, I presume, you hold as your model, was altogether a happy one, since, by your own insinuation, it would appear that the magistrates of this district must needs ask what is proper of their friends. You will, however, now

be pleased to lay before the bench the evidence with which, by your statement, you are prepared to substantiate the charge against the accused party, whereby we shall be better enabled to judge of our past measures and future course."

"Sir," returned the chidden counsellor, "I must crave permission to assure the bench that, in my last remarks, nothing was farther from my thoughts or intentions than to utter an insinuation, implying a remissness of duty to any one of its members in this case, or aught in the least degree disrespectful to the bench itself. On the contrary, I have again to express my grateful thanks for the gracious patience bestowed, I fear unworthily, upon me in the course of my previous observations; and let me confess that I feel the obligation all the more deeply since I have now been informed of the price of that patience. In accordance then, sir, with your dutiful request, I will at once proceed to lay my evidence before the bench."

While he was preparing to do so, Mr. Good-

head rose from his seat, and leaning forward to the bench, exchanged some words in a subdued voice with the presiding magistrate. He next turned round and addressed in a similar manner a sentence or two to Langton, then resumed his seat. Also at this stage of the proceedings two men advanced from the rear of the crowded court, and sat down upon a vacant form, which had been held in reserve for the witnesses, if any, on the part of the accused. The one appeared to belong to the respectable order of farmers, of the Dandy Dinmont type, with a stout frame, honest face, and possessed of a shade more of cultivated sagacity. The other ranked more with the comfortable labouring class, and his face shewed some indications of practical shrewdness. Their names were respectively Robin Rawburn and John Dods.

Before calling the witnesses, Counsellor Broadbite withdrew from his blue bag a letter which the accused frankly acknowledged to be in his hand writing. It had been obtained by an

officious person from a messenger who had been dispatched with it to the nearest post-office, and placed in his possession. He introduced it with much grave formality and effect; and read from it a passage, which he characterised as not only admitting the heinous design, but directly pointing to the criminal. He would reserve, however, he said, his further comments upon that point for another place (meaning the Quarter Sessions), and would now content himself with the production of his witnesses. The part of this letter alluded to read as follows :—

“ I am charmed with the wildness of this locality, and greatly taken with the blunt humour, honesty, and rude hospitality of the Lammermoor people. The men are generally strong and well made, the women good looking, modest, and frugal, and the country lasses commonly stout, with good features, and shew a pair of good legs under their very short home made dresses. But I am particularly pleased with the simple and diffident manners of the children, who, notwithstanding

standing their shyness and modesty, are often found intelligent, can read well, and, above all things, well up to their catechisms. The other day I saw a beautiful little boy that I feel half inclined to carry off with me, since children here (unlike India) are not marketable commodities."

The last sentence alone was at first singled out for perusal by the counsellor, but the chairman on the bench requested that the two preceding ones should also be read, and copies of them taken down with the other. William Mossscript was the first witness called by Mr. Broadbite.

"I live at Lockermaykiss; am a tailor by trade. On Monday last, as I was proceeding to Dunsdie to make some clothes for a family there, I saw at a distance a man on horseback, riding westward upon the farm road, by the banks of the river Watch. After he came to a certain part he stopped for a time, then dismounted, and led his horse down the steep bank to the stream, where he fastened the animal to a tree. He then advanced on foot to a thicket by the side of an open

dell in the wood, and there remained hidden for some minutes. There was a small child, a boy, at the time playing and amusing itself with chasing butterflies in this dell. I am certain it was the missing child, for I work for its family, and had made "its first breeks," and knew it well by sight. After it had played for some time, I heard the man call upon it to come to him and he would make it a present, upon which it disappeared from my sight among the trees. The place it went into was near to where the man stood. I was upon a footpath under the trees on the top of the bank, and close to them. Upon seeing the horseman in this position, I felt curious to know what he was after, and I stopped for a time. I afterwards saw him leading his horse through the wood in a westward direction. He had nothing carrying that I saw except a small rod, or riding whip. I did not see the child again. It might have been following him in the wood, but I did not wait to see anything more. It was the last of the child and the last of the

horseman I saw. I would know the horseman again. I am aware I am speaking upon oath. I can swear to his identity. He is now in the court, and that person, Langton, is the man."

"Bee ma faith, neebur Dods, but the tyeler's a bang fallah here—he's goin' t' do for our freend, the mosstrooper, bee a wag o' his tongue," whispered Robin Rawburn, in the ear of his comrade, in tones not quite inaudible to the two counsellors and some others near them, the accused himself inclusive, which was followed by a suppressed laugh.

Mr. Goodhead here rose to put some questions to witness, but Counsellor Broadbite objected to his doing so, upon the ground that the defendant had at first stated that he had there no professional man employed on his behalf, consequently the former gentleman had no *locus standi* in the court. But this objection was overruled by an explanation, and the production of a letter of authorisation in the court. Counsellor Goodhead then said that he would not now trouble the

bench or the witness with more than two or three questions.

“ You swear that you did not see the gentleman in close contact with the child—that you did not see him carry it away, or the child following him.”

Witness—“ I have answered these questions.”

Counsellor—“ Answer them again.”

Witness—“ I do swear that I did not.”

Counsellor—“ Then answer me another question. When you left the road, had you yourself anything carrying?”

Witness—“ Nothing but my articles of trade.”

Counsellor—“ What are these?”

Witness—“ My lapboard, goose, bodkin, shears, needles, and the like small things.” (A laugh.)

Counsellor—“ You are sure you had nothing else than these, and such-like small things?”

Witness—“ Quite sure.”

“ I’ll warrant the loon had a wheen cabbage leaves besides aneth the labies o’ his coat, to keep

the goose warm," again whispered the former indecorous auditor; upon which there was a general titter, and the poor tailor looked anything but happy.

Henry Stotts was next called by Counsellor Broadbite. We will give his evidence in his own vernacular form—

"Ah live at Hungricruik; am a herd bee birth an practeese (a laugh). On Monday last, as ah was gain wast owr th' muirs t' Evlay, ah sat doon t' rest masel among a wheen fairns bee the roadside, an' no far off a stell there; an' as ah was lyin' doon ah hard the tramp o' a horse no far off, sae ah gied a keek up, an' there ah saw a man ridin' eastward on a boon meer, wi' a little wee bairn, a callant, on the saidle afore him. Ah didna see muckle mair o' him or where he gaed, for ah gat up an' walked on, an' was sune oout o' sight. He had naething else carryin' that ah saw, but a burd o' the doo specie, a common cushy-doo (cushat-dove) whuch ah hae heerd sinsyne belanged t' the lost or stown bairn. Ah

wad ken the man again among a thoosan folk
an' ah wad ken the horse again as weel. The
man's i' the coort the day, and that's him there
(pointing to the accused); am perfectly sartin
o'd, an' swear to'd. Ah hae seen the man an'
horse baith afore, aboot a week syne. Ah than
fand him ridin' among ma maister's perks an'
muirs, an' loupin' dykes an' ditches at his own
wull; an' as ah had directions thrae the maister
t' stap trespassers an' poachers, an' other sus-
picious-lookin' characters, ah went t' him. Ah
thought him a suspicious character, an' ah told
him as muckle afore ah left him. Am no boond
t' answer that question, nir t' tell ony man ma
reasons for thinkin' him a suspicious-lookin'
fallah; it's no necessar here. It may be diseera-
ble enough t' some folks, but it's no sae t' me.
Ah hae got into trouble enough a'ready, or ah
wadna be here the nou, wi' speakin' owr freely t'
that tricky constable-body there (pointing to
Yadie Webster) who ca's himsel' a weaver, an'
wanted an order t' weave a wab thrae the wife,

an' sa gat oot o' mi where ah lived. But am no t' be dune a second time, it am ah no."

Stotts then withdrew.

The next witness was Allison Dods, examined by the same gentleman.

"I live at Runkley. My husband is alive, but has been absent for some days at a fair, but I see he has returned this afternoon since I left home, and is now in the court. On Monday last, as I was coming across the south moor from Kettle-shiels, and near to a stell there, I met a man on horseback, holding a little boy on the saddle before him. I knew the child; it was the same child that is now missing. I knew it, because I am acquainted with its family. I visit them, and have known them for several years. I can swear it was the missing child. I can swear to the man who was riding with the child in his arms."

There now ensued a momentary pause, during which the learned counsellor (Broadbite) turned his face significantly to the gentlemen on the

bench. Upon his countenance there was an expression of imposing or painful satisfaction, while a faint gleam of something like forensic triumph was visible.

“ Gentlemen,” said he, “ I have now produced my witnesses, and submitted to you their unimpeachable testimony in this grave case. More, I think, you will not deem necessary. I have, therefore, for the present, discharged my painful duty to my client, and it next remains for you to perform what the law prescribes for the protection of the public—and the redress—the poor redress—of that wronged and suffering woman—a part which I feel assured you will duly perform. With this evidence before you, you are now also in a position to judge how far I was warranted in making certain remarks which I addressed to you previous to the examination of the witnesses.”

Amongst the auditors at the conclusion of these remarks, there were mixed signs of applause and wonder.

" Wha would hae thought it," said a grave-looking elderly dame, " i' sic a fine-looking fallah ?"

" Whusht, woman !" said another by her side, " the business is no dune yet. The other gentleman has t' speak ; an' ye ken thae lawyers can wheel round an' pu' the coat-tails o' yin another, an' the de'il himsel wadna bait them at it."

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIAL CONTINUED.

COUNSELLOR GOODHEAD now rose, and, addressing the bench in a calm and dispassionate tone of voice, said—

“ Gentlemen, my learned friend has just told you that with the last witness he has concluded his evidence in this court; and, in appealing to you for approval, has implied that, as he is perfectly satisfied with its potency and conclusiveness, you, as a matter of course, must be so likewise (O! from the other). He has further told you

that, for the present, he has discharged his responsible duty to his client; and, in doing so, has implied an exhortation that you will in like manner discharge your duty. (I said no such thing, interrupted the other). My learned friend, I fear, forgets the logical distinction between what is implied and what is verbally expressed. That he has discharged his onerous and responsible duty to his client, and that with vast eloquence and ability, is a fact of which I myself am ready to bear witness. But with respect to the evidence upon his side, which he assures you is unimpeachable and conclusive, I beg here to say that I think he was somewhat premature in his deductions, by pronouncing the purity of the metal before it had gone to the crucible. The most important portion of that evidence has yet to undergo the crucial test; and, without detaining the court with unnecessary declamation, I shall proceed at once to notice those points of the business deserving my attention. Gentlemen, as the case now stands, it would appear to be as-

sumed by my learned friend, that if the charge of guilt has not been finally settled against the accused gentleman, abundant evidence has at least been shown to warrant his immediate commitment to the ignominy of a public jail, as the inevitable consequence of it; and that if this event in the gentleman's life had not been forecast at his nativity, or foreordained by Fate, my friend, by the force of his rhetoric and gifts of imagination, had this day clearly compassed this achievement without her. But with all humility I would say, and that with a full appreciation of the charms of poetry and romance in their proper places, that had these lofty faculties descended here into the prosaic regions of matter, for the production and elucidation of apposite facts, instead of entertaining us with irrelevant flights of fancy and pathetic appeals to our passions, I, for one, should certainly have experienced more edification. For me, before a tribunal of justice, one simple fact told in the plain language of an infant is worth all the poetry of Homer or the rhetoric

of Demosthenes. Next, with regard to my learned friend's theory about reading the inward thoughts and designs of man by outward signs and imputable incidents, or what he terms his circumstantial evidence in this case, I have only to observe thereto that he seems to dive into the inscrutable mysteries of the human mind with a prowess and success equalled only by those with which his valorous tailor, Mossscript, penetrated those perilous recesses upon the wooded banks of the Watch, alleged to be grievously haunted by the elves and witches of Bessy's Hole (a laugh). I proceed now to a matter which has this day been introduced with a solemnity befitting a death-warrant. I refer to the letter in evidence — a letter which, I must remark, has been unlawfully possessed by the party for the prosecution; for at that stage of the proceedings its interception was unlawful, and which my client has generously and gratuitously acknowledged to be the production of his own hands. I confess here I am totally at a loss to comprehend its

formidable character, albeit the overstrained construction and exaggerated importance with which it has been brought forward. If the passage quoted is capable of one interpretation it is equally capable of another, and this other with a mighty odds of probabilities in its favour. How many of us, let me ask, in our lifetime have heard, especially where ladies were of the party, upon casually seeing an engaging or beautiful child, express their admiration of it by exclaiming, ‘O, I could steal or run off with that sweet little creature?’ &c. But what, I ask, in the name of common sense, would be thought of any of us if we suggested that an actual theft was contemplated? ‘What a ninny you are, to be sure,’ would be the reply of the lady. I see my learned friend is blushing, and I tender thitherward my sympathy (a laugh). But, again, were even such an odious crime in contemplation, would not the black designer be the last party in the world to divulge such a dishonourable intention, even to the most intimate friend? Moreover, it must be

remembered, that for one person seized with the unholy passion for kidnapping a child, there are thousands of others who would probably express their admiration in similar terms, yet shrink with horror from the perpetration of the act. Upon this hypothesis, then, the odds are manifestly thousands to one against the presumption alleged by the prosecution. Besides, let me finally ask, are there not hundreds of other children sporting around us of whom the same words might have been jocularly expressed, as readily as the infant of Mrs. Cockburn ? Now, gentlemen, I have no further comment to make upon this far-fetched and very ridiculous piece of the evidence ; indeed, I almost take shame to myself for having been induced to notice it at all. My duty next turns upon the two last witnesses, namely, Henry Stotts and Allison Dods.

At this moment there was some commotion in the auditory part of the court. It appeared that after his first examination, Hairy Stotts had stolen out, and turned his footsteps homeward, and there

was now some speculation as to the probability of his recall. A constable, named Yadie Webster, was soon put upon his scent, and speedily returned with the wrothful captive. Upon his return to the witness-box, the counsel (Goodhead) eyed him with some interest, signifying—if we may venture to interpret looks—as much as “now, you are just the obstinate-looking customer that, now and then, I like to tackle with.” His cross-examination immediately commenced.

Counsel.—“What is your Christian name?”

Witness.—“Sheurly, man, ye ken that afore nou.”

Counsel.—“Thank ye, friend, for reminding me of that which no one else here is likely to forget.”

Witness.—“What d’ye mean bee that, fallah?”

Counsel.—“Nothing more, friend, than that there appears to be no other *stots* amongst us but one, and that is *hairy* (the face of witness was all but covered with coarse hair). Are you a native of these parts?”

Witness.—“No.”

Counsel.—“Where, then?”

Witness.—“Wad ye like t’ ken?”

Counsel.—“I would.”

Witness.—“What for?”

Counsel.—“Only that I might know where to find you when I wanted to put you in my will.”

Witness.—“D’ye want t’ get owr me like the weaver?”

The counsellor knew not what he meant, but replied,

“By no means.”

Witness.—“Weel, man, as ye’re a gye queer fallah, ah wull tell ye. Ah was born i’ Byrefit, if ye ken o’ sic a place.”

Counsel.—“Perfectly; and a very wholesome and proper name and place for the birth of hairy stots—thank ye.”

During this play of the learned gentleman, for the purpose of putting himself upon easy terms with the witness, there was much merriment in the court.

Counsel.—“ Now, Hairy Stotts, to me you have shown yourself obliging, and I am only going to put to you a few very simple questions, by which, if you answer to the point, we will continue our good understanding. The first I would put is—what did you mean by the words you expressed to your neighbour upon the entry of the accused gentleman to-day into the court—I will not ask you now to repeat them, for you saw I heard them, and put them on this paper.”

Witness.—“ But am no boond t’ answer that unless ah like.”

Counsel.—“ Certainly not. But it’s no matter ; you can think of it. Had you seen the gentleman before ?”

Witness.—“ Ah had.”

Counsel.—“ Where, may I ask ?”

Witness.—“ Ah told it in the coort afore.”

Counsel.—“ Thank ye ; I remember it. What you said had reference to something that had passed between you and him on that occasion, had it not ?”

Here Counsellor Broadbite objected to this question as being out of order. But the objection was suddenly and strangely quashed by the silencing voice of Hairy Stotts himself.

"Whusht, man," sounded the hard and lusty voice to the gentleman upon his own side, "ah ken what am doin' weel enough masel."

As may be readily conceived, such a salutation, and from such a quarter, shook even the gravity of the bench to the foundation, and the discomfited counsellor himself was not proof against the shock.

"The de'il o' the like o' that I ever heard in a coort afore," exclaimed Robin Rawburn to Dods, rubbing his elbows spasmodically. "It bangs a' the nowt I ever heard in Hallow Fair. But, fagges, man, the tousy stot's roarin' i' the right side o' the dyke, too."

"Ay," answered John Dods, "ye see hou the clever lawyer is making him roar wi' the tickling o' a stray, while the other chap could barely make him open his mouth wi' a whup."

The interrogating counsel, steady to his purpose, as if nothing had occurred, and without even noticing the objection of his opponent, resumed,—

“ In reply to a question put to you by my learned friend touching the matter of your first meeting, you stated that you accosted him riding on private or forbidden grounds under your trust ; or, in other words, you found him roving about in your fields and moors, from which you had instructions from your master to exclude all trespassers, poachers, and other suspicious-looking intruders ; am I right in what you said ? ”

Witness.—“ Exactly right, sir.”

Counsellor.—“ Upon that ground, then, I think you were only discharging your duty to your employer. But, may I ask, why you thought a gentleman of his appearance a suspicious-looking character ? ”

Witness.—“ Because ah hae been beguiled afore nou bee appearances.”

Counsellor.—“ A very proper answer , and so

have we all been in our time. But, now, will you tell me candidly, what particular thing it was about him that first awoke you to a sense of suspicion?"

Witness.—"It was the horse he was ridin' on, an' what he said aboot it. Ah kend the meer, an' tauld him sae."

Counsellor.—"What did he say about the horse?"

Witness.—"He tauld a rather queer story aboot hou he cam bee 't."

Counsellor.—"What was that, pray?"

Witness.—"He telled me first he had hired it, an' a' of a sudden the tae-end o' his tongue made the other a leer, bee sayin' he gat it on the road."

Counsellor.—"A very queer story indeed. And what did you say to that?"

Witness.—"Ah telled him that what he had said was vera like what the callants at schule said whan onything stowan was faund on them ; they aye 'faund it on the road.' An' this was

the thing it made me the maist suspicious. An' whan he rode away, ah telled him I didna think he wad wun far afore he was catched, for ah thought the owner o' the horse wad sune be after him. An' whan he was feshed into the coort the day, ah thought ma words had come true, an' that was what ah said whan ye heard me whusperin' on the form t' ma neebur ; an' beside, I said, I'll warrant he'll say he found the bairn on the road, as he said aboot the horse."

Counsellor.—“Thank ye, Stotts, and now I am just about done ; but I want two or three points more. What was the colour of the horse the gentleman was riding ?”

Witness.—“It was a broon meer wi' a white spat on its brou.”

Counsellor.—“You are sure of that?”

Witness.—“It's as sheur as daith, sir, an' that's sheur enough.”

Counsellor.—“You can swear to that?”

Witness.—“Ah can.”

Counsellor.—“And can you swear that that

was the same horse and same person you saw bearing the child you spoke of in this court?"

Witness.—"Ah can."

Counsellor.—"And can you swear that the accused gentleman, Mr. Langton, now sitting upon that seat before you, is the same person?"

Witness.—"Ah can."

Counsellor.—"Now do me the favour to remain a few moments longer where you are until I recall the last witness."

Allison Dods was next cross-examined.

Counsellor.—"Now, Allison, you need not be nervous on coming before me; for (and I may as well put you up to the secret at once) I am too much afraid of losing favour with the fair sex to be hard upon any of the sisterhood. You saw upon Tuesday last, a man on horseback bearing the missing child on the saddle before him—I will not now trouble you by asking any roundabout questions as to the precise hour and spot where this occurred."

Witness.—"I did, sir."

Counsellor.—“Are you sure it was the lost child?”

Witness.—“I am, sir.”

Counsellor.—“Can you swear to it?”

Witness.—“I can, sir.”

Counsellor.—“Do you remember what sort of horse the rider was upon?”

Witness.—“I did not notice it particularly.”

Counsellor.—“Do you recollect its colour?”

Witness.—“I do.”

Counsellor.—“What colour was it?”

Witness.—“White, sir.”

Counsellor.—“White! do you say?”

Witness.—“I do, sir.” (Sensation.)

Counsellor.—“Can you swear it was white?”

Witness.—“I can.”

Counsellor.—“Would you know the man who had the lost child in his arms upon its back?”

Witness.—“I would.”

Counsellor.—“Have you seen him again since?”

Witness.—“ I have, sir.”

Counsellor.—“ When did you see him ?”

Witness.—“ To-day.”

Counsellor.—“ Where ?”

Witness.—“ In this court ?”

Counsellor.—“ Can you point him out ?”

Witness—“ I do not now see him.”

Counsellor—“ Ch ! is he not in view ?”

Witness—“ No, Sir.”

Counsellor—“ Is the gentleman there (pointing to the accused) not the man ?”

Witness —“ No, sir, he is not.” (Great sensation.)

Counsellor—“ Can you swear that Mr. Langton is not the man you saw, upon Tuesday last, bearing away on horseback the child of Janet Cockburn, now present ?”

Witness—“ I can.”

The counsel now looked round [to the magistrates with an expression of astonishment]; then, turning to witness, said :

“ Now, Allison, I am just going to repeat] to

you one or two of my last questions. Do you now swear that the horse spoken of was a *white* one?"

Witness—"I do."

Counsellor—"And do you swear that the accused gentleman, Mr. Langton, standing there, is not the man you saw with the child?"

Witness—"I do."

Counsellor—"Now, Hairy Stotts, do you swear the horse you saw the man riding upon, and holding the child thereon, was a *brown* one?"

Witness—"Ah do, sir."

Counsellor—"Now, you may both retire."

With this the learned gentleman turned to the bench, and said :

"Now, gentlemen, I think I cannot do better, at this juncture, than follow the example of my learned friend, by intimating to you that my professional duty to my client for this day is at an end, unless further called upon."

At this moment Allison Dods, drawing herself

up to her full length, and extending an arm, exclaimed :

“ There is the man !”

All eyes were now turned to the door, which had just opened for the re-admission of the stout farmer of former notice, who had been absent for a few minutes.

He met the general gaze undauntedly, and, walking on, resumed his former seat by the side of John Dods upon the vacant form.

No one seemed now to know what to say or do.

Mr. Broadbite, especially, looked confounded ; and no doubt he felt his position the more uncomfortable because he had rashly pledged, and reiterated his pledge, in the course of his address, that he was in possession of evidence, positive and circumstantial, that would support the charge beyond appeal. He, however, said nothing.

At length Captain Eyecastle broke the silence, but not before he had beckoned to and exchanged a few words in an under-tone with the constable, Yadie Webster.

"Mr. Langton," said he, "I presume I need scarcely inform you that the evidence this day in support of the odious charge which has been preferred against you, has failed to warrant us in desiring your further presence here. You are, therefore, I am gratified to say, at perfect liberty to leave this court whenever you think proper to do so. Permit me, further, to express to you my sense of deep regret, together with that of my brother magistrates, that you should have been, by some strange coincidence yet to be explained, subjected to such unseemly treatment at our hands."

At these words there was something like a general expression of approbation in the court, and all eyes were immediately turned upon the person who had been so unexpectedly singled out and identified by Allison Dods as the real Simon Pure, and kidnapper of the lost child.

This singular incident seemed to invest the matter with fresh complications and embarrassment; two of the main witnesses for the prosecution having deposed to points diametrically

opposite to one another—viz., one swore that the horse was brown, and the other that it was white. One swore to the identity of one man, and the other swore negatively, but pointed out the true offender in the figure of another individual. By the evidence of Stotts, Langton was the criminal; by the evidence of the woman Dods, Langton was not the criminal, but another man; and her evidence carried the greater weight, because she knew it to be no other than the child of Janet Cockburn.

By law, upon this evidence, neither of these alleged offenders was guilty, since the depositions of the one neutralised those of the other; nor had there been produced in the court another witness who had seen either of these men carrying away the lost infant, or in any way capable of corroborating or seconding a single statement made by the two witnesses.

Consequently, until fresh evidence was produced, the magistrates had no alternative left but to dismiss the case.

And this had been the express view taken of it by the chairman, when he spoke in such distinct terms to the accused gentleman, who, however, seemed to be in no degree more affected by the result than by the charge itself.

Upon the conclusion of the former's remarks, he bowed politely, and in a dignified manner said :

“ Sir and gentlemen, I beg to return to you my very sincere thanks for the courteous terms in which you have announced and awarded to me in this court the privilege of my liberty. Liberty, like health, is one of the greatest boons of our social state ; and I can prize its possession and measure its loss the more duly because of the lesson which I have experienced here this day. That I am now in possession of it, or that I have withstood undismayed an adverse torrent of eloquence, which, however awful in sound, was fraught I think, with more indiscretion than taste, more force than strength, and more zeal than wisdom, cannot but be a marvel to many, and a disappointment to at

least one gentleman present. To those around me, in the first instance, it must be plain that I happily owe this blessing to another gentleman in this room, whose talents as an advocate, whose clever and conciliating address to the several witnesses have, I own, frequently led me to forget my humble post among the honours of this court, in my admiration of the ease and skill with which he clove asunder those mighty waves wheresoever he planted his foot. You have kindly expressed your regret for the untoward occurrence which had placed me before you in such a painful position. With the fullest appreciation of these friendly sentiments, permit me to assure you, on the word of a brother-magistrate, that the novelty of that situation, in the exchange of a seat on the bench for one in the ‘dock,’ and the interest with which I have this day been regarded by our rustic auditors—exceeding in this respect, I have the vanity to say, even that bestowed upon the bench itself—I am more than compensated for any inconvenience or trouble to which I have been

subjected. Had I otherwise felt, it was in my power, at any moment or stage of the proceedings, to relieve myself from my situation; and, let me add, that had I chanced to have been asked the simple question, if, in my ride in the direction referred to, I had seen such a child as the one described, instead of unceremoniously serving me with a summons to answer to the singular charge contained in it, my answer to the question would have obviated all the trouble and sensation thus created. Moreover, for the laudable ends of justice, I should have felt it my duty to aid the parties by putting them in the proper direction for the discovery of the *real* offender. It was deposed to-day by Allison Dods that she saw a man carrying off the child upon a white horse. I myself could have corroborated that testimony, and should have done so if questioned on the matter; for upon the same day, on my return homeward to my inn, the last horseman or party I saw upon the moor corresponded in every respect with that described by the witness. Nor

let it now, I entreat you, gentlemen, be thought for a moment that I should withhold any information that could tend to facilitate the recovery of the infant, or bring the offender to condign punishment. In conclusion, then, I have only to add that the same individual pointed out by Allison Dods, now in this court, is the person I refer to."

During the course of this speech there was scarcely a breath to be heard in the whole assembly, and its conclusion was followed by a demonstration of respectful applause. The offender alluded to now rose to his feet and signified his intention to speak; but he was anticipated by the chairman, who told him that he was not now called upon to make any statement to criminate himself, but if he wished to volunteer any remarks upon what he had just heard, they would be listened to with due attention.

" May I know your name?" he enquired.

"Ay, that yer honour may, and welcome. It's Robin Rawburn, an' a gye weel-kend yin baith, farther away and nearer hame, though no owr muckle in coorts. Ye hae been sae gude as to tell me, sir," he continued, "no to say onything t' condem mysel i' this business, unless I like. Now, as I am gye thrang at hame wi' my hye an' corn at the present time, an' as I see that wabster-body has come roond t' get ower me, as he did freend Stotts, for a bit order in the weavin' line, I think, t' save further fash, I may as weel turn king's yevidence on the spot; forby, I think the revelation of the business has been reserved for me by yer worshipful brother there, who has just been cookooin' to you frae the wrang side o' the wud (much laughter, in which Langton joined heartily). It's a common sayin' among the chields o' the press-gang, that yae volunteer's worth ten pressed men, and so I think the same should stand gude by the Justices in dealing wi' rogues; and when I now make my confession, I

hope this will be thought on t' my advantage, afore Yadie Webster tickle my knuckles wi' his iron bracelets.

“ Weel, gentlemen, I'll begin bee tellin' ye that the saidle has been rightly put on the white horse at last; but I maun tell ye, likewise, that it was first warmed on the back o' the broon meer. I see my freends aroond me are starin' at this; and, as far as yin can guess at the like through the birses about the mooth o' neebur Stotts there, he looks as pleased as ony nowt-beast among a pickle clover. But, bee my sarty, freends, toosy as the chield is aboot the eyen, he's gleg anough in vision t' tell a corby-craw frae a glead, or a white horse frae a broon yin. His yevidence the day was a' right enough, and so was Ailey Dods's. Forby this, fagges me! if I dinna think Stott's a warlock as weel as a witness among us; for when the mosstrooper, as yin o' the learned gentlemen the day denominated Mr. Langton—ye needna blush, Mr. Broadbite, ye ken we're auld freends—was in-

troduced by the constable—usher into this gude company, the first words uttered by honest Hairy were, ‘ I’ll warrant the fallah will say he faund the bairn, like the horse, on the road.’ Now, gentlemen, when the de’il was axed by the minister t’ gie him a sample o’ his foreknowledge of futurity, and told him sax weeks aforehand the exact text, the vairse, the chapter, and buke he would preach frac on a certain Sabbath day, he was nae mair correct than freend Stotts when he spake thae words; for they were only a short way o’ expressin’ what Mr. Langton said to me when he handed the bairn frae the back o’ the broon horse to the back o’ the white yin. Hairy, then, had seen the bairn wi’ *his* man on the broon horse afore the exchange had been made, and Ailey Dods had seen the bairn wi’ *her* man on the white horse after it had been made—so much for the credibility o’ thae witnesses. In my penitential confession I hae this far acknowledged my complicity, as the lawairs would say, i’ the business; and as the receiver is aye

counted warse than the thief, I had better say a word or tway mair afore I thraw mysel an' my confederate on the clemency o' the coort.

" Gentlemen, what I am now goin' t' say t' ye may look like presumption in yin o' my uncouth manners, but ye 'll maybe forgie me for a' that. I hae often i' my lifetime likened Innocence t' a beautiful maiden walkin' the earth bare-footed. She sometimes leaves her footprints distinctly behind her, and sometimes they are lost t' us among thorns an' tangle that beset her path, leavin' only shreds o' her garments an' draps o' blude in her rear, which, t' folks ad-dicted t' suspicion, are preferred to be thought the symbols of violence or crime; while others, mair virtuous in mind, an' mair charitable in heart, no seekin' for ill, but aye for gude among their fellow creatures, will pass by the brambles, or what they dinna comprehend, in silence, and, recovering the track, press onward till they overtake the maiden, bleedin' an' torn, sittin' at

the fit o' the altar o' her own worship. The yevidence o' yer case the day, gentlemen, has been a' vera gude, only the *moral* has been a' wrang thegither, and I now speak on the best authority in the coort. On his journey westward, Mr. Langton saw the child in a lonely dell on the Watch, and, struck by its appearance in the solitary place, he resolved t' get a nearerer view, takin' it for a fairy, as I suspect, and, if found to be a mortal, to make it a present o' half-a-crown; but when he spake to it, the little elf vanished from his sight. On his return homeward, some hours later of the day by a different road, he found the same little creature lying in the open muir. It had wandered away in search o' its brother, who was herdin' some nowt i' the muirs, and had lost its way, and o'ercome wi' fatigue an' wi' greetin', had sunk doon among some lang heather, and fallen into a deep sleep. By its side was a faithful cushy-doo, which it had taken young from the nest and reared as a constant companion at hame, and almost wher-

ever it went. Also, within a few feet on the other side, was a large spotted ether lying at full length on the grass, and it was through it and a little bird that the bairn was discovered. The gentleman took up the child an' the doo, an' carried them on the horse afore him, intending to leave them at the first suitable hoose or place he came to on his way hame ; but I chanced to meet him. I had met him and conversed with him afore that, and when he explained to me the circumstances, I proposed to relieve him of any further trouble, which seemed so much out of his way, and took the child hame wi' me, resolvin' that my gudewife should take care of it till we had learned who had lost it. I had occasion t' leave hame early on the next day, and didna get back till the following day at nightfall (or I would hae said mair aboot it), when I learnt that our mosstrooper freend there was summoned to appear afore the coort the day to answer to the charge of babbie stealin'. Weel, I thought if he didna deserve better, he would maybe no be again

havin' his morals brushed up a wee at yin o' our Scotch institutions, as he had told me he was fond o' little adventures among the hills ; sae leaving the matter to himsel, and as I had little time for deliberation, I resolved no to interfere wi' the coarse o' justice. However, there hap - pened to be a clever lawair, whom I kenned a wee, stayin', on a visit, wi' a gentleman no far off, sae off I set to him on my now famous white horse, an' telled him I would be muckle ob - leeged to him if he would ride ower to the coort the day, to attend on behoof o' a freend o' mine (a stranger i' the country), who had got unex - pectedly into trouble, bee a queer charge bein' alleged against him, which I didna think him capable o' committin' ; but as I had nae time t' claver aboot particulars, he must just take them an' deal wi' them, as they came afore him, which I kenned he was very competent to do. I then wrote a bit note, an' sent it wi' a messenger t' watch for Mr. Langton, and hand it to him afore he entered the coort, tellin' him that he would

hae a freend there as well as mysel, and t' keep his heart up; but, as I suspect, the fears o' the judgement awaitin' him prevented him frae openin' it till half the game was up wi' him. The next thing that I hae to say is touchin' the apparition that was seen in the coort, which, I may tell ye, was naething less than the flesh an' blude o' the livin' bairn, held up wi' my ain hands ahint the crood, t' gie effect, i' the nick o' time, to Mr. Broadbite's eloquence. Now, gentlemen, this is the longest speech I ever made i' my lifetime, an' as my gudewife ahint the crood there, expecting it to be my dying one, is lookin' impatient for my end, I'll just here crave liberty to call her forward to bear witness t' my guilt, and gie the last seal t' my doom. Now, Kersty, my darlin', come this way t' the tribunal, for my time's up."

At this call, a most respectable and comely looking woman advanced, bearing a child in her arms, which the woman Cockburn no sooner saw

than she rushed forward and clasped it to her bosom. “Mammy,” shouted the infant, as she covered it with tears of joy and caresses. Thus terminated this extraordinary case.

CHAPTER XV.

LORANCE AND JOHN DODS REVISIT FORMER
SCENES—A POSTSCRIPT—A BULL FIGHT IN THE
MOORS.

WHEN Mrs. Cockburn had recovered from her momentary excitement of joy, she turned to Mr. Langton, leading her little boy by her side, and offered him her fervent thanks for the preservation of her child, and entreated his forgiveness for the wrongs that had been done to him on her behalf. Lorance took her by the hand and shook it tenderly, requesting her to think only of her-

self and her child, whose troubles had already been more than enough for her, and assured her that, so far as he himself was concerned, he should never regret what had taken place, since he had been instrumental in the saving and restoration of her little boy. He then took from his pocket two golden pieces and placed them in the palm of the child, and begged, as the only memorial of the event, that he might be permitted to possess the wild dove, which, for its affection, should always have a place with himself in his sitting-room.

“O, yes, mamma, we’ll let the gentleman have it, and I will get another next year, for I know where all the cushies build in the wood,” said the gay little fellow.

It were unnecessary here to offer any comment upon the proceedings contained in the preceding chapters affecting our hero, the particulars of that event having sufficiently explained themselves. By a confidential friend, however, to whom we had submitted these sheets for perusal,

we have been charged with a melancholy ignorance of the topography of the county ; nevertheless, he assures us that had we but consulted him on this point, and changed the *venu* of the trial, we should not have been so far from the mark, “ barring the licences.” But before finally quitting the subject, we will supply a few further remarks, relating to a particular point in the report, from the pen of our late friend Toritop, which we found appended, in the shape of a postscript, to his former communication.

“ P.S.—I was alike charmed and surprised, but more ashamed than either, on turning to the columns of the *Star*, on the day following that of the ‘ trial,’ to see how *my* report figured there. In the process of copying (previously referred to) it had been with me like an affair of steeple-chasing, scudding on at the tail of a dashing leader, in which I was allowed not a moment of time for my own reflection ; and so, upon my arrival at home, the same expedition was required, and, without pausing for their inspection,

I passed on my notes to the printing-press in order to meet the forthcoming issue. When the proofs for correction were handed to me, I confess to you I was more than once disposed to commit them to the flames; but then there was as little time as before for deliberation—the type was set, and what could I do? Upon the rehearsal of Broadbite's opening speech, I was dumbfounded by its discursive eloquence (an inspiration totally new to me from that quarter), and twice I threatened to throw my Johnson at the head of the little urchin who read it over to me with such a gusto of irony—for printer's devils are critics in their way, and can take the measure of a man's cranium, which has two or three times undergone their inky manipulation, as correctly as any phrenologist; yet I declare it sounded very unlike anything I had ever before heard uttered by that gentleman. But the mystery was soon revealed to me. The reporter for the rival paper, the *Comet*, with a felicity of fancy as of speed, had so dressed up his oration with flowers of rhetoric, after the fashion of the

maypole buried in garlands, for the purpose of *telling* in the Whiggish journal, that there scarcely remained discernible a single fibre of the old ‘dry stick.’ Next day, for the first time in my life, I was humorously charged by my friends with *poetical* leanings in the business ; but I faced it out by desiring my critics to suspend their judgment until they had compared the report with that of our contemporary paper. But of all the subscribers, so we were assured, no one read the speech with more astonishment, if not pride, than did the speaker himself, who, after its first perusal despatched a messenger for six extra copies. On being facetiously complimented on his speech by some of his professional brethren, it was said the gentleman looked rather *queer*, which meant *modest*. With many of them this new development in his character was regarded somewhat in the light of forensic novelty. Hitherto his genius had been less remarkable for its creative or its inventive faculties, than for its fidelity as a copyist or conservator of originals. It was but a

year or two since that the gentleman gave to the world a striking illustration of the aptitude of his talents in this respect, in the reproduction of a clever book of local history, without any material alteration beyond the substitution of his own name for that of the original author, *quæ amissa salva*. “R. T”

Nothing daunted by his former *contretemps*, Lorance Langton shortly determined to make a second excursion through some of those romantic scenes which, upon the former occasion, had yielded him so much real pleasure. He had, moreover, the intention of paying this day a kindly visit to Mrs. Cockburn and her child, in whom, from the recent occurrence, he felt now a considerable interest. To again accompany him on this expedition, he had engaged the services of John Dods.

Long before the appointed hour the worthy man had been walking out and in, to and fro, about his comfortable cottage and kale-yard, surveying the moors in the direction of his awaited

visitor. About eleven (the time named), the expected comer, mounted upon the old huntress, came cantering blithely up on the heathery sod, and received a profound bow from the honest John. Observing him to be dressed in his better clothing, a stick in his hand, and a hat instead of his former highland cap on his head, Lorance said—

“ Now, John Dods, I perceive you are equipped for an immediate start; but before we proceed to enter the dangerous dominions of the lady of Bessy’s Hole, and I surrender myself up to your care for the day, I must request you to furnish me with a roan-tree staff to carry me scathless beyond the limits of her empire, for you know what befell me from my unbelief and want of due precaution on the former occasion, after you left me with your magic stick.”

“ Fagges me! sir, I’ll no forget that in a hurry,” answered John; “ but I’ll cut ye a fresh saplin’, which answers best, afore we gang ower the mairch; only I’ll thank ye t’ keep a look-oot

at the time, for fear the auld crone come and grab up my knife."

We lost our knife on a former visit, which our guide humourously imputed to a trick of the witch.

"I see you have got a tree of the right sort in your garden, John. Have you also a horse-shoe nailed upon your door?"

"I hanna that, sir; but I've got as gude, an' that's a rowan-tree bolt inside, made bee ma ain hands."

"Now, I must appoint you my equerry for the present, and request you to take my reins, for I mean to alight and examine what style of house-keeping goes on under that cosy thatched roof of yours," said the horseman.

"Weel, sir," replied the other, obeying his commands, "I thought as muckle, an' ye've just ta'en the couper word o' me. Ailly, I'll bail for't, will feel the honour ye do her vastly, an' she has a farrel or tway o' her best scones t' pit in our pootches afore we start. I'll just pit the meer i'

the byre there, where the cou stands, and gang in bye wi' ye."

In the person of Ailly was presented the type of a frugal, respectable, and sensible housewife of her class, while everything within and without her cottage denoted the luxury of cleanliness, decorum, humble taste, and contentment. The good woman seemed to be at the very summit of her ambition, imbued with no ulterior cravings beyond her family's comfort and happiness.

"Now, Ailly," said John, as the two entered, "here's the gentleman come t' thank ye for the help ye gied t' Yadie the weaver, to get his honour a free trip t' Buttney-bay for kidnapping little bairns."

Ailly dropped a courtesy and blushed sadly. "I'm quite ashamed t' appear afore ye, sir," said the blushing woman; "but indeed, sir, if I hadn't been sure ye were no the man I saw wi' the bairn, my heart told me when I looked at ye standin' i' the coort, an' Mr. Broadbite sayin' sic unnecessar'

things as he did aboot ye, that ye couldna do the like, an' mony yin said sae as well as mysel."

"Now, Mrs. Dods," interposed Lorance, with an appeasing smile, "I must entreat you not to say another word on the subject. The learned gentlemen's speech was great fun for me. But I must defend you against the imputation of your husband here. Indeed, if all were known, I am not quite sure that he himself had no hand in the pie; for, you know, it has been an old trick among husbands, ever since the first of their order, to pass sins from their own shoulders on to those of their wives."

A basket of home-baked bread, consisting of bannocks, oaten cakes, and flour scones, with a large cheese, and a "bowie" of rich milk, with the cream upon it, together with a horn spoon and knife, for despatch thereof, were placed on a well-scrubbed deal table before the guest, nearly all of which he had the good nature to taste, in order that the amiable hostess should not feel

disappointed. When this ceremony was over, some scones and cheese, already packed up in paper, were handed to the husband, with an injunction, humorously laid down, that John, in the parting of the provisions, should deal fairly with the gentleman.

"Thank you, Mrs. Dods, for the hint," said Lorance, with a smile. "I shall now look to that point," saying which, he wished her good-day, and, resuming his saddle, the party set out upon their journey.

In their progress onward, marked by convivial conversation, they soon reached the wooded banks of the Dye, and, following for a short distance the course of the stream, in which they observed swarms of small trouts, darting swiftly from the rippling currents into the still pools, they at length wound their way up a considerable ascent, and speedily came in sight of the simple habitation of Janet Cockburn. It was arranged that John, who was known to the family, should proceed alone to the house and announce the arrival

of the visitor. In a few seconds the rustic *chaperon* returned with Janet by his side, who, with a slight flush upon her comely countenance, made a graceful courtesy to the horseman, which he acknowledged with a punctilio due to a peeress.

"Mrs. Cockburn," he said, "since the untoward circumstances which lately caused you so much mental suffering, I have felt it alike my duty and desire to pay you a visit and again see my little friend. Both of you, I trust, have ere now entirely recovered from the effects of that painful event."

"Sir," replied Janet, with a modest grace in her manner, "I cannot express to you my sense of pleasure at seeing you, and my heartfelt gratitude for obligations which I can never forget or repay you. My husband, on his arrival at home —on learning the circumstances—would have travelled any distance to offer you our humble thanks, but he was afraid it might have been thought a liberty."

"O, dear no!" Lorance replied, "I should

have been glad to see your husband. Pray is he at home to-day?"

"He will not be home till the evening, sir, and, I am sure, he will much regret his absence at this moment, when he becomes apprised of your visit to us."

"Well, Mrs. Cockburn," he said, "perhaps I shall be more fortunate at another time should I chance to be passing this way. But can I see the little child?"

With this Janet, desiring his pardon for a moment, went into the house, and after a momentary absence, returned with a globular bottle and an old-fashioned china plate in her hands, containing some spirits and short bread, and requested that Mr. Langton would do her the pleasure to partake of the same. With his accustomed frankness, he did so, but again inquired for his little friend.

"His elder brother," Janet replied, "had called this morning, and taken him with him to the moors, where he is minding some cattle, and

I am extremely sorry, as so will be the child, that you cannot see him, sir ;” whereupon Lorance shook her by the hand and departed.

His guide was now consulted as to the most practical route to K——, the former humble abode of his esteemed kinsman, which, though now deserted and without a “standing stane,” he felt a pensive inclination to visit. After progressing for some distance, and entering upon the valley of the Watch, they were suddenly presented with a sight that somewhat shocked the sensibilities of our traveller, his guide being more familiar with such objects. This was a shepherd’s wife, with her dress gathered up between her feet to such an elevation as to show the longitude of a pair of admirable legs, which were nimbly trampling round and round in a capacious tub, filled to the brim with water and wet linen. The frugal woman, being so intent upon her work, with her face turned downwards, had not seen the strangers until they came plump upon her ; nor, on the other hand, owing to an intervening rise

in the ground, had they previously observed her, so as to have been enabled to glide past without the surprise.

“Gude day t’ ye, Tibby,” said John Dods, quite unconcernedly—for John seemed to know everybody and every place—“that’s a caller job ye hae got there—hoose’s the gudeman?”

The woman sprang from the tub as from a fiery furnace, dropping her dress in the water before she had effected her leap. Her face was now like crimson, and her condition seemed ill suited for holding parley with our guide. Lorance meanwhile stole past without apparently noticing her.

The party now crossed the stream and entered upon a rising hill covered with rank heather, interspersed with green patches of spongy and boggy ground. When they had travelled on to the distance of a mile, the loud bellowing of a bull was distinctly heard in advance of them. As they proceeded onward, upon topping an eminence in the moor, they soon saw from whence

the sounds came. Two herds of cattle, separated from each other to the extent of half a mile, were grazing in view, and each seemed to be under the sovereignty of a bull, and each sovereign, like other monarchs, seemed to regard the other with some jealousy, if not absolute hostility. Indeed, the two horned kings at this time appeared determined mutually to have a quarrel, and, if allowed, to settle the dispute after the old fashion of heroes by single combat. The one was a mighty despot, alike vindictive and remorseless to man and beast under any caprice or imaginary affront, and, besides being the stronger in arms, he was the louder in lungs; and it was the terrific challenge of this tyrant borne upon the wind, that had reached the ears of the travellers. The challenge had been accepted and responded to in defiant tones by the other sovereign.

Each of the herds of cattle was attended by a herdsman—one of them by an old man, the other by a boy of about ten years of age—and each

herdsman had a colly-dog of a powerful description, termed, in Scotch parlance, a “nowt doug,” signifying a dog expressly for cattle or “nowt.” This animal differs essentially from the sheep-dog, its mode of working being totally different from that of the other. When hounded by its master, it darts off in a straight line to its object, trusting alone to outspeed the bullock, and, except for the purpose of turning him, rarely runs at his head, but nips him low down at the heels. This shews the perfection of his breed. If he bite higher, or seize the tail, it is a defect, and one to which young dogs are liable, but often receive a cure from a lash backwards of the foot of the bullock. For sheep he is dangerous, being apt to bite and scatter the flock. On the other hand, the true sheep-dog receives his commands and passes off in a beautiful curve in the rear of his master, never in front of him, and continues his course wide from the straight line, and always approaches his charge in front, except when to fetch or gather it. It is the perfec-

tion of this animal never to press on or separate a single sheep from the flock ; and in cases of a refractory subject, one attempting to break off, he bounds forward and dashes his shoulder against its head with a bark, but will not otherwise use mouth. Another mark of his excellence is, that he always makes his sudden turns with his tail thrown outwards, and he must be almost silent.

A fierce and hardy dog of the former description—so fierce, indeed, that his youthful master (the boy) could not even pat him without the risk of receiving a snap or growl in return ; or should he chance to drop his small dinner in the presence of the animal, for that day the little fellow must go dinnerless, unless he find a second ration—was despatched as a king's messenger to the bellicose monarch, by a signal from the youth, accompanied by the words, “ March (the name of the dog), ken the bull and fetch him here.” Strange as this may appear (but perfectly true), the sagacious animal with all his surliness started off to the distant herd, which consisted of about

twenty milch-cows, singled out the thundering brute, and brought him, deliberately following behind, to about half the distance that separated the two herds, when, receiving a call from the boy to stop, he sat down upon his hinder quarters and looked on, apparently awaiting his further commands.

Meanwhile, active operations nearer at hand were observable. There happened to be in this immediate vicinity some half-dozen or so of solitary and somewhat stunted fir-trees. By the foot of these, hitherto, the shepherd-boy with a smaller child—who were none other than the two children of Janet Cockburn—had been amusing themselves; but now the elder brother was in the act of assisting the younger up a branchless and slippery tree until he reached the lower bows, after which he sped upward like a cat. This done, the elder brother next addressed himself to another tree, and speedily took a commanding position upon a strong bough thereon.

While these proceedings were going forward, our hero, with his guide, remained stationary spectators. They were posted within fifty paces or so of the two boys, and within a shorter space of a number of turf stacks, built in a circular form, and piled up to a short peak, after the fashion of so many classic temples.

"Now, sir," said John Dods, "there's t' be a terrible fight, and our Lammermuir brutes are as wild as the bulls o' Bashune or Spain ; an' yince they get their blude up, there's nae tellin' what they'll no do ; let me advyse ye to get up on the tap o' yin o' thae turf rickles, for safety, where ye can see the combat, an' I'll take the meer bee the heed an' gang oot o' harm's way."

"By no means, John," answered Lorance, "I command that you yourself should ascend one of the stacks, and I will post myself upon that rising-ground a little lower down, and nearer the action."

"Lord sakes ! ~~John~~, ^{sir} dinna gang near them,"

exclaimed the terrified guide ; “when yince they’re roosed they’re as dangerous wi’ their horns as the Heelanders wi’ their dirks.”

“Now, ^{John} ~~sir~~,” said the other, with a smile, “you must do as I have commanded you, although, I may tell you before-hand, you will have no occasion for such precaution. The bulls will find plenty of use for their horns with each other, without coming in search of you to poke your ribs. If they are well matched, by the time the combat is over, be assured there will not be much running in the heads of either of them.”

John Dods obeyed, and was speedily seen standing erect, like a huge vane surmounting a steeple ; while Lorance pricked forward on his mare, and stationed himself nearer to the scene upon the mound referred to, and very much resembled the Duke of Wellington’s equestrian figure on Constitution Hill. The local excitement was now indescribable, and it seemed to have penetrated the two respective herds, which appeared as if quite sensible of what was about

to take place between their mighty leaders. With their ears erect, they sniffed, lowed, and shook their heads, and stared strangely at a distance, but shewed no inclination to advance and take part in the fierce encounter. The despotic neighbour by this time had travelled on to within about a hundred yards of the other flock, sometimes running, sometimes stopping to reiterate his challenge, to paw the earth, tossing showers of dust and grass over his head. There was now something terrifically grand in the sight of the monster, thus maddening himself up preparatory to the combat—lashing himself with his tail, butting his head against some bank, growling vengeance, working up his blood to a higher temperature, and stirring up all his energies and fury to a fighting-key. Upon seeing the approach of the challenger, the other bull left his herd and led out to meet him, uttering as he went a sound between a growl and a subdued roar. As the space shortened betwixt them, however, it was astonishing to observe the sudden change that

overcame them, and the calm and collected manner in which they now prepared for the strife. The former, more weighty and powerful, being the older by a year—the one four, the other five years old—and having about twelve months previously being the victor in a similar encounter, had, in his progress hitherto, appeared more like a wrothful autocrat about to chastise his slave than to combat with an equal.

Nevertheless, bully and domineering as was his general character among other animals, he now shewed no disposition, as he eyed his advance, to undervalue his opponent, or the importance of the encounter. He accordingly selected for the *plaza de tores* an advantageous position upon a rise in the ground, and awaited the approach of the enemy. When the other had advanced to within five or six paces of the challenger, they each drew in their muzzles, lowered their heads, projecting their horns, and with a terrific but stifled roar, rushed upon one another. Their brows met with a dull and

deafening sound, their horns clattered as they became locked in each other, and, with their tails outstretched, like the collision of two bounding ships, they now flung furiously all their strength and weight against each other. Art or skill had no part in the conflict ; the science of nature, brute force, and courage must alone sustain them in the strife. At first there seemed an equal poise between the two mighty brutes ; but after an awful strain and suppression of breath, the greater weight told, and backward went the lighter animal for a few paces, the incline of the battle-ground favouring the former. But this advantage on the same side did not long continue. In his receding steps the younger bull threw himself on his fore-knees, flung his muzzle forward, his head flat on the ground, whereby, getting under those of the other, he acquired a greater amount of level power, and, with one terrible bound, he flung his antagonist to a side, depriving him of his elevation. Without a breath their heads and horns again met with an

awful clash, and, locked in each other as before, the huge animals, with their vast and straining muscles trembling all over, now swayed to and fro alternately ; fighting crosswise on the slope they were now equally circumstanced.

The conflict at this moment was terrible to look upon, the two thin partitions of skull-bones only parting the two antagonistic spirits from one another ; their vast ears overlapping each other, their eyelids in hostile touch, and their eyes looking like little hells, about to jump into one another. Soon, however, the extra carcass began to tell against the larger bull, for fat is no auxiliary quality in a prolonged fight. Still the strife continued with unabated rage, and victory appeared yet to sway in turns from side to side. So evenly balanced were their physical powers that, barring the inequality of condition, it seemed that pluck and endurance must alone decide the combat ; but even these, it must be admitted, require the aid of condition, and this the younger bull possessed, and he seemed to be sensible of

it. He plied his antagonist with all the energy and tact he could command, now with a roar and with a bound, now giving way, now crushing his formidable foe for yards backwards, while the other toiled on desperately, his eyes reddened with the force of blood, his mouth wide open, and his tongue thrust out, covered with a yeasty foam. Thus the combat continued for some minutes more, when by an impetuous rush, and an upward jerk of his head, bearing his antagonist before him, he flung the monster upon his haunches. A dreadful roar followed from the open mouth of the fallen champion. At this moment March (the boy's dog) was commanded to interpose, and Lorance simultaneously advanced and "threw up the sponge." The victor, as if approving the Irish proverb, appeared disposed to keep him down and there belabour him, but the dog walked in to the rescue, gave a bark, and brought him back to his herd. The other arose, shook his head repeatedly, and, drooping his ears, retreated in a mood very differently from

that in which he had so shortly before made his advance.

The termination of the conflict was the signal for John Dods to return to the lowly earth, and hasten to the side of the horseman. In this step, however, he was anticipated by the elder of the two boys, who had shown on the occasion more actual courage than our prudent guide—having during the combat left his perch on the tree, and proceeded to within a few paces of the battle-ground. He was a fine, intelligent little lad, sadly sunburnt, with black smooth hair, very dark brown eyes, and bore in his features a striking resemblance to his younger brother, whom Lorance had so singularly discovered when lost upon the open moor. His manners, considering the primitive province, were genteel and easy, and his appearance denoted a birth or rank above his present occupation. He seemed to evince an early taste for reading, and had in his hand a small book, and a collection of ballads, amongst which were the story of Sir William Wallace,

"The Lord o' Roseland's daughter," "The Woodpecker tapping at the hollow Beech-tree," &c. Our horseman, attracted by the appearance of the boy, had called him to him, and had the curiosity to look at his books, which were very much wasted and worn by use. His younger brother was now led forward by Dods, whom he knew familiarly, and with much diffidence, presented his hand to his former preserver, who had now dismounted for the purpose of meeting and conversing with his little friend. He patted him frequently on the head, and, after holding a little conversation with the two brothers, presented each with half-a-crown, then remounted his horse and resumed his journey.

"Well, Dods," said Lorance, as the two were slowly picking their way through the rough ground; "what do you think of the battle now, since you have survived the dangers of the engagement?"

"It's been the maist awfu' fight, sir, I ever saw wi' horned nowt. Ma very hair stude on end

when I saw them close wi' yin another. But I was right glad t' see the big brute get sic a soond drubbin'. He'll yibbles nou mend his manners for times t' come. Ever syne he was little mair than a calf he's been a terror t' man an' beast, baith in the perks an' on the muirs, an' has vera near killed several folks an' horses. Yince the Ha' brawn (boar) gied him a bit of a jag i' the nose wi' his tusk when he wanted t' take a tur-nip frae him, an the bull jumpt at him, an' squeezed his guts oot again the wa'."

"You may rely upon it," said the other, "he will not soon forget the chastisement he has had to-day. The lighter bull fought him gallantly; and when I saw his condition, I could have staked a 'pony' on his head. In my time, John, I have witnessed combats between pugnacious animals of almost every description, from a rat and terrier, up to a tiger and elephant. I have seen in the jungle the tiger spring on to the head and split into shreds the ears of the mightiest of

quadrupeds, and in the next second heard the bones of the assailant, in the agonies of death, crackling like twigs under the ponderous tread of the infuriated victor. In the amphitheatre of Madrid I have seen the fiercest bulls of Andalusia goaded and tortured into madness, then pitted against mounted *picadores* and butcherous *mata-dores*, to gratify a brutal taste and passion in the *elite* of a nation. Well, instead of experiencing excitement and admiration, the Englishman's heart is sickened by the loathsome exhibitions in this theatrical slaughter house—instead of witnessing an illustration of the nobler qualities of the dumb animals, opposed to manly courage in legitimate strife (for the Anglican race are men for *fair play* in all things), his bowels are moved in pity and disgust at the cruelty and injustice to which the brutes are subjected; and he stands appalled at the applause and pleasure which greet the dexterous actors in the performance of their cowardly and revolting barbarities. But of

all the conflicts I have ever witnessed, that of to-day was to me the most interesting and exciting, so divested as it was of everything that could be construed into cruelty, beyond, perhaps, that of suffering the animals to meet. It was, withal, the result of a spontaneous impulse of heroic nature, which culminated in a salutary lesson to the aggressor—a lesson, too, such as no other means could so effectually and profitably administer to so dangerous a brute. The mighty and irrational chief was, however, but carrying out the principles of many a *reasoning* monarch, by demanding homage and implicit obedience from his subjects—the two herds of cattle belonging to the same extensive farmer—and asserting his right to rule in his territory according to his own will. But bad as that rule may have been, and great as may have been the abuse of his power, he this day exhibited a virtue which many a human despot in his fall has failed to evince—he fought bravely and fell gloriously.

I hope, then, that his valiant and peaceful successor will wear his trophies and sway his horns with wisdom and clemency."

The rest of this day's journey was unproductive of any matter worthy of recording here.

END OF VOL. II.

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JAY'S.

THE ENGLISH IN INDIA.—The following letter, from Colone Walker, will show one of the many inflictions to which English residents in India are subject; and will at the same time point out the curative means within reach. It says (with that sincerity and emphasis which always bring conviction to the frank impartiality of the English mind), in a letter to Messrs. Rowlands, Hatton Garden, dated from Whitley Lodge, Taunton :—

“ I consider it almost an imperative duty to state the valuable efficacy of your most excellent Macassar Oil. For the last fifteen years I have been bald, occasioned by a most dreadful fever whilst in India. I have used almost every means to procure a head of hair again, but all efforts seemed fruitless until accidentally a friend advised the use of your valuable Hair Restorer (I can give it no better name); and, after using a 3s. 6d. bottle, every symptom of a new head of hair began to show itself, to the surprise not only of myself, but of my family. I resolved on having another, and obtained a 7s. bottle, and before the whole of it was used I had, and have now, as handsome a head of hair as ever man enjoyed; and I earnestly recommend that all who have not tried this most excellent Oil will not fail to do so.

(Signed) “ J. WALKER, Colonel.”

Comment on a testimonial like this, and which may be seen on application to Messrs. Rowlands, would be wholly superfluous.

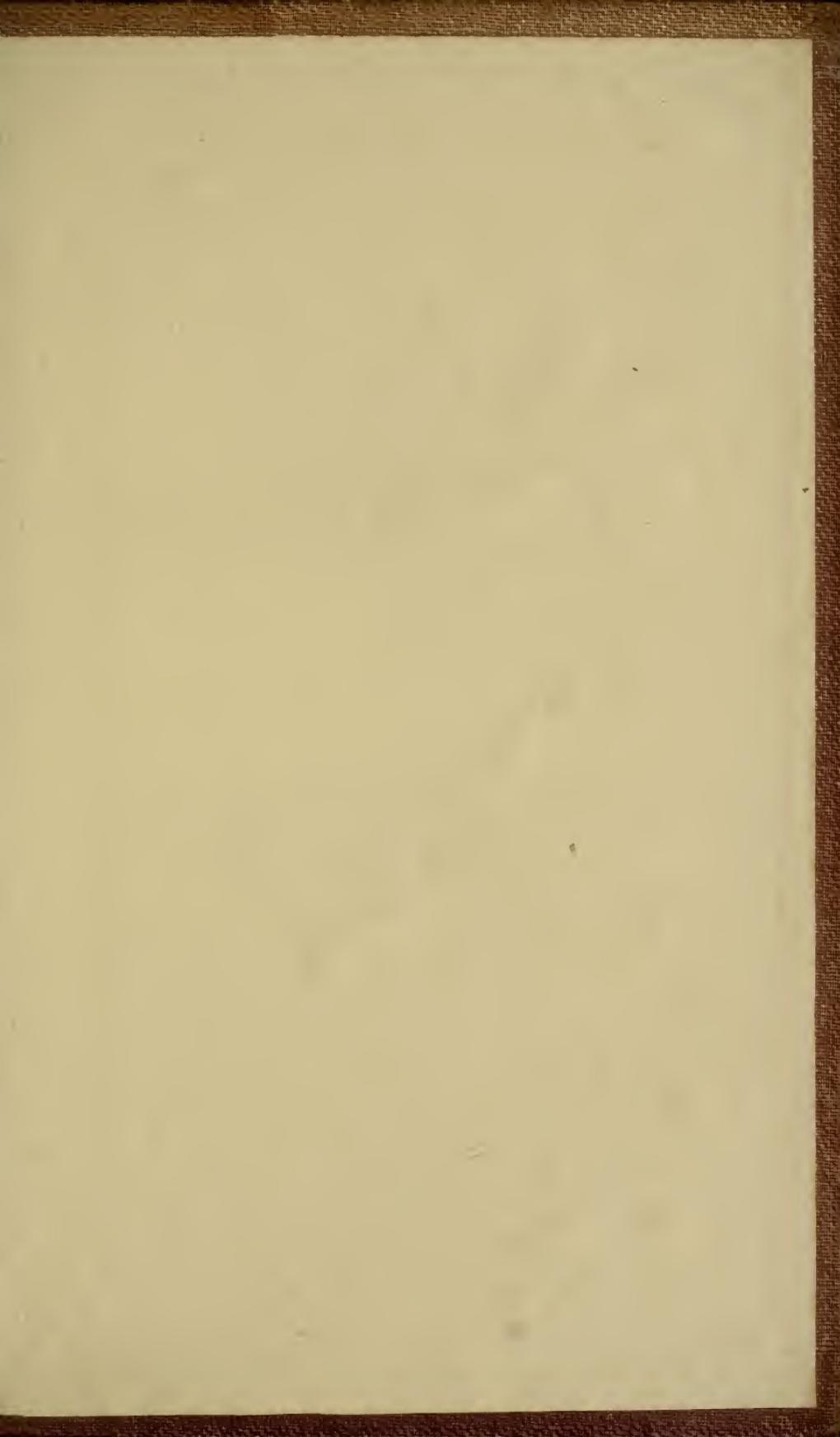
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